



HOW TO:

ENJOY MEALS WITHOUT SMOKING



Nicotine is the addictive drug found in tobacco. Your body goes through nicotine withdrawal when you try to cut down or stop using tobacco. That is why you might feel some withdrawal symptoms or have a hard time dealing with certain situations that are linked to your tobacco use as you go through this process of recovery.

Why does this happen?

- ▶ Food may be used to get the same effect as cigarettes: enjoyment, relaxation, pampering, time out, comfort, having fun with friends etc. Smoking and eating are both ways to meet these needs, so when you quit smoking; you may want to eat more.
- ▶ Nicotine can stop feelings of hunger for as long as one hour and can make your blood sugar level go up. When you quit, your blood sugar may drop, causing you to feel hungry.

How common is this?

- ▶ Stress levels are highest during the first two weeks after quitting, then they gradually taper off.
- ▶ During the first few weeks of quitting, even small stresses can lead to powerful urges to smoke.
- ▶ As time goes by the urges get weaker.

What can you do about it?

- ▶ Know what stresses or negative moods give you the urge to smoke. Think of other ways to cope with these situations.
- ▶ Get up from the table immediately after a meal.
- ▶ If you are alone, call a friend as soon as you've finished eating.
- ▶ If you're not alone, ask someone to massage your shoulders.
- ▶ If you have coffee or a fruit drink, focus on the taste.
- ▶ Brush your teeth or use mouthwash right after meals.
- ▶ Wash the dishes by hand after eating.
- ▶ Instead of smoking, read your list of reasons for quitting.
- ▶ Call a relative or friend or the NYS Smokers' Quitline for encouragement.

REMEMBER: When you recognize high-risk "trigger" situations, you can begin to handle them better. Eating is often a very important trigger. After you stop smoking, food will taste better to you, and smell better, too!