

# Tobacco Dependence Treatment

## Frequently Asked Questions for Residents of Smokefree Housing



*Tobacco in this document refers specifically to the use of manufactured, commercial tobacco products, and not to the sacred, medicinal, and traditional use of tobacco by American Indians and other groups.*



## **I've tried to quit smoking several times, but it has never worked. Why can't I quit?**

You can quit! Even if you've made it a day, a week, or a month — you've made it! Try to learn from past quit attempts. Figure out what happened so that you can avoid putting yourself in similar situations in the future, choose a new quit date, and then try again. This time, you may be able to quit for good!

## **Will I gain weight if I quit smoking?**

This is a common concern. Even if you do gain a bit, it's nothing compared to all the good things you're doing for yourself. Using nicotine replacement therapies (for example, nicotine patches, gum, or lozenges) may help reduce your food cravings. Choose healthy snacks, and increase your physical activity to burn off the extra calories. Drink lots of water.



## **Why not quit "cold turkey"?**

Nicotine is very addictive. It is hard for most people to resist cravings using willpower alone. Nicotine replacement therapy medications deliver a controlled amount of nicotine to your body to soothe your physical cravings and allow you to be more successful in your quit attempts.



## **If nicotine is the problem, why should I use a nicotine replacement?**

Nicotine replacements do not contain any of the cancer-causing agents found in tobacco products. They give you a reduced amount of nicotine to help calm your cravings and irritability. This helps you focus on the emotional aspects of your quitting journey. Nicotine replacements include the gum,

patch, or lozenge. You can talk with your doctor to discuss these and other treatment medications to find what will work best for you.

## **How will I relax, if smoking is the thing that relaxes me?**

Because your body is addicted to the nicotine in the tobacco products you use, the feeling of relaxation when you smoke actually comes from relieving the withdrawal symptoms your body experiences between cigarettes. Once you are able to work through withdrawal symptoms, true relaxation comes from doing healthy activities you love and practicing stress-relief techniques such as positive thinking, deep breathing exercises, physical exercises, and mindful meditation.



## **Is it safe for me to use smokeless tobacco products to help me quit smoking?**

No tobacco product is safe. Smokeless tobacco should not be used for quitting smoking. Long-term use moderately increases the risk of a fatal heart attack, fatal stroke and certain cancers. It is also addictive – smokeless tobacco users often experience the same withdrawal symptoms as individuals who stop smoking cigarettes.

## What about e-cigarettes?

The Food and Drug Administration has not found any e-cigarette to be safe and effective in helping smokers quit. The fact is, e-cigarettes are tobacco products too.

Though we still have a lot to learn about the health consequences of vaping, we are very troubled by what we've seen so far. E-cigarettes still produce a number of dangerous chemicals including acetaldehyde, acrolein, and formaldehyde. The inhalation of harmful chemicals can cause irreversible lung damage, lung diseases—and even death.

## What resources are available to help me quit?

There are several resources here in Minnesota that are free of charge. Not only do they provide access to phone, text message or e-mail counseling, they can also assist in getting nicotine replacement therapy medications. Free help is available through your health insurance or through Quit Partner ([www.QuitPartnerMN.com](http://www.QuitPartnerMN.com)), Freedom From Smoking ([www.lung.org/stop-smoking](http://www.lung.org/stop-smoking)), and the Lung Help Line ([www.lunghelpline.org](http://www.lunghelpline.org)). Free medications and counseling are available to those eligible for medical assistance and MinnesotaCare.

