

# ROAD MAPS

Tips and Tricks for your Journey to Tobacco Freedom

Sponsored by the Florida State University Area Health Education Center and State of Florida, Department of Health

Spring 2020

## New Year, New Me: Resolving to Make Small Changes

There's nothing like a new beginning for making changes. It's a great time to reflect, and think about the changes you want to make in your life. What's important to you?

Every year, millions of people make big resolutions to overhaul their behavior and get healthier. Quitting tobacco is a big one, and does a lot to improve your health. Quitting puts you at lower risk for a heart attack or a stroke. It makes it easier to breathe and get exercise. It makes you smell better (and helps your nose smell better, too!).

Seven out of ten tobacco users want to quit—but, most aren't ready yet. Whether you're ready or not, there are small changes you can make this year to help you get ready—and help you get healthier.

1. Change where you use tobacco. Where do you smoke? In your car? In your house? On your porch? Pick a place you regularly smoke and resolve to not use it anymore. Changing up your habits can help you use tobacco less often.

2. Change when you use tobacco. When do you smoke or dip? When you wake up in the morning? After a meal? When you get home from work? Pick a time you normally use tobacco, and resolve to do something else. For example, if you always smoke or dip after dinner, try going for a short walk instead.

3. Keep track of when you use tobacco, and why. Keep a slip of paper with your tobacco. Before you smoke or dip, pause. Take a moment to note the following:

- The time
- How you feel (happy, sad, mad, frustrated, hungry)
- What's going on (Did you just get home from work? Did you just finish lunch? Did your friend annoy you?)

Pausing and reflecting before you use tobacco can help you identify some of the hidden reasons, or triggers, behind your tobacco use.

You may be ready for a big change, like quitting, or a small change, like cutting down a little. Either way, you can resolve to make a positive impact on your health this year.

## Did you Know?

People who quit with a group are more likely to stay tobacco free for at least six months!

If you're interested in finding a group near you, visit

[AHECtobacco.com/calendar](http://AHECtobacco.com/calendar)



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Interested in resources to help you quit?



To find help online, in person, over the phone, or via text, visit [tobaccofreeflorida.com](http://tobaccofreeflorida.com)



# Dear Professor

## Get Advice from a Professional

### Dear Professor, When I quit smoking, how will I deal with stress?

We all know that quitting tobacco can be stressful. Even thinking about it can cause a sense of panic in some tobacco users. There are ways to help decrease the potential stressors related to your quitting.

First, we must identify if what we are feeling is stress or is it nicotine craving or withdrawal. The experience can be similar: feelings of frustration, irritability, difficulty concentrating, and other negative feelings. If it is nicotine craving or withdrawal, your nicotine replacement therapy (NRT), such as gum and lozenges, can be of great benefit. Your body has been used to getting nicotine with every cigarette for however many

years you have been smoking.

It is unreasonable to expect that your body can adjust from that frequency of nicotine to none without difficulty. That is why our fast acting NRT, like the gum or lozenge, can be a real life saver! It gives you a little of that nicotine you need without all the additional harmful chemicals that are in a cigarette.

Preparing for your quit date, you may also want to think about what you are going to do instead of using tobacco. Start a hobby, something that you enjoy doing and will keep your mind and your hands busy. What about doing puzzles, playing cards or taking up knitting? Exercise is also an excellent way to combat the stress. Exercise will increase your endorphins, the body's own "feel good" mechanism and give you a sense of satisfaction.

Reach out to others while you are quitting. Both professionals and friends/family can be a great support when you feel yourself getting stressed. You know that they want you to be successful and will be there for you.

If the other aspects of life are getting you down, one thing you can try is to add more humor to your life.

*Laughter makes you feel good. And this positive feeling remains*

## Got a craving? Try using the 4D's

**D**elay

**D**rink Water

**D**eeply Breathe

**D**o Something Else... like Sudoku!

Visit [sudokuoftheday.com](http://sudokuoftheday.com) for a new puzzle every day.

8				5		
	7		9			4
		9		7	8	3 2 5
3		1		9		5
		6				1
	9			3		6 2
2	8	3	6	5		7
	1				2	8
			1			9

*with you even after the laughter subsides. Humor helps you keep a positive, optimistic outlook through difficult situations, disappointments, and loss.*

*More than just a respite from sadness and pain, laughter gives you the courage and strength to find new sources of meaning and hope. Even in the most difficult of times, a laugh—or even simply a smile—can go a long way toward making you feel better. And laughter really is contagious—just hearing laughter primes your brain and readies you to smile and join in the fun.*



**Brigitta C. Nuccio**  
DMSc CTTS  
PA-C  
Florida State University

*Mrs. Brigitta Nuccio is a nationally certified and Florida licensed Physician Assistant and a Certified Tobacco Treatment Specialist with other ten years of experience treating tobacco dependence. She is a founding faculty member of the FSU School of P.A. Practice.*

## Smokeless Tobacco Corner

### Benefits when you quit:

People talk a lot about how quitting tobacco can lower your risk of lung cancer. But, smokeless tobacco users—that is, people who use dip, chew, snuff, or snus—don't really have to worry about developing lung cancer from their tobacco use. However, that doesn't mean there aren't benefits to quitting dipping!

Some of the benefits of quitting are the same for smokers and smokeless tobacco users. Both enjoy lowered risk of heart disease.

In fact, a year after quitting, your risk of heart disease is cut in half.<sup>6</sup> Another similarity is a reduced risk for oral and pancreatic cancers.<sup>7</sup>

Two to six weeks after quitting, lesions in your mouth caused by smokeless tobacco use will begin to heal themselves without medical intervention.<sup>8,9</sup> Your tooth and gum health will also begin to improve after two weeks as inflammation, or redness and irritation from use, lowers.<sup>9</sup>

### Benefits

- ✓ Lowered risk of heart disease
- ✓ Lowered risk of pancreatic and mouth cancers
- ✓ Healed mouth sores
- ✓ Improved tooth and gum health

### Pit Stops: *Tips from from people who quit*

### What can I do to get through a craving?



I make sure to keep nicotine lozenges on me at all times. I keep them in the same place I used to keep my dip.



Mint gum helped me a lot. And drinking cold water.



I took it one cigarette at a time. I didn't tell myself I had to quit, just that I wasn't going to smoke RIGHT NOW. I did that every time I had a craving.



I learned to crochet. It keeps my hands and mind busy. I also think about how I don't want any of my yarn to smell like cigarettes.



# Share your Journey

Quitting tobacco is a different journey for everyone. Share your journey through stories, art, photography, or poetry to the FSUAHEC@med.fsu.edu! Your journey could be featured on the back of our next issue.

Breaking the chain of cigarette addiction was the hardest thing I've ever had to quit.

During my journey, I realized staying occupied and away from others that are smoking is really helpful to me.

Meditation and visualizations really help me stay focused.

I feel a lot better and can exercise when I'm not smoking. It might take a while but anyone can do it.

I recommend to everyone: just don't give up!

**-Max C.**

*Max C. participated in one of the tobacco cessation groups offered by the Florida Area Health Education Center (AHEC) Network through Tobacco Free Florida. AHECs offer three kinds of groups: 1) **Tools to Quit**, a one-time, two-hour group, 2) **Quit Smoking Now**, a four-week, one hour group, and 3) **Tobacco Free Florida: The Journey Starts Here**, a six-week, one hour group for people experiencing or living with mental illness and/or co-occurring substance use disorders. To learn more about how to attend or schedule one of these groups, contact your local AHEC by visiting [AHECtobacco.com](http://AHECtobacco.com).*

## References

<sup>1</sup>Taylor, G., McNeil, A., Girling, A., Farley, A., Lindson-Hawley, N., & Aveyard, P. (2014). Change in mental health after smoking cessation: Systematic review and meta-analysis. *BMJ* 2014;348:g1151.

<sup>6</sup>MedlinePlus [Internet]. Bethesda (MD): National Library of Medicine (US). [Updated 2019 June 26]. Benefits of quitting tobacco [updated 2019 June 9]. Available from <https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/007532.htm>.

<sup>7</sup>Healthessentials [Internet]. Cleveland Clinic. 8 reasons to quit dipping tobacco [updated 2018 Oct 4]. Available from <https://health.clevelandclinic.org/8-reasons-why-its-time-to-quit-dipping-tobacco/>.

<sup>8</sup>Martin, G. C., Brown, J. P., Eifler, C. W., & Houston, G. D. (1999). Oral leukoplakia status six weeks after cessation of smokeless tobacco use. *Journal of the American Dental Association*, 130, 945-954.

<sup>9</sup>Wallstrom, M., Kjelsberg, M., Johannessen, A. C., & Hirsch, J. (2011). The reversability of snuff-induced lesions: A clinical and histomorphological study/ *International Journal of Oral and Maxillofacial Pathology*. 2011;2(4):4-10.

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