

# I Quit Smoking and Now I'm Feeling...

Here are some symptoms you may experience after you quit tobacco. They may last a few days or weeks. Here also are some suggestions on how to handle them. The peak of these symptoms usually takes place in the first few days after quitting but for some people they can last quite a bit longer. This can be uncomfortable but it is normal and they will fade.

You may feel	Why it may happen	What to do about it
Craving	Receptor cells in your brain have come to expect nicotine. Now that you've quit, it will take some time for them to calm down and decrease in number.	Consider using a form of NRT if you have not begun already. This makes the transition from tobacco use easier. Try to avoid some of the "triggers" that make you think of smoking. Try distracting yourself with old or new activities.
Irritable, nervous, anxious, grouchy	Withdrawal from nicotine. Your body is used to having nicotine on board. It does not feel normal to not have nicotine. Your body will adjust!	Walk or exercise if you are medically cleared to do so. Call a friend. Try deep breathing. Get enough rest. Take a warm bath. Drink plenty of water and fruit juice. Ask your provider about taking NRT – or more NRT.
Depression	This is another symptom of withdrawal. In addition to missing tobacco physically, you can expect to also miss it emotionally. Even though tobacco is harmful it can still feel like it was an old friend. Don't be surprised if you miss it.	Consider using NRT or Zyban that can help with this symptom of withdrawal. Reach out to friends or a health professional if needed. Even though this is common, depression should not be ignored.
Lightheaded, dizzy, feeling "spacey", difficulty concentrating	Not a withdrawal symptom but a sign your body is trying to adjust. If you are using NRT, there is a small chance this could be from too much nicotine. Talk with your provider.	Be patient with yourself and take it easy if you can. Drink fluids get some rest. Accept that you will not be yourself for a few days. Be careful when using equipment or driving.
Sleepy, weak, no energy	Also common with withdrawal. Your body is working hard to adjust. Eventually you will have more energy. Your body is recovering!	Leave extra time to accomplish tasks. Take naps. Drink fluids. Consider using NRT if you are not already using it.

Insomnia and other sleep problems	Your metabolism is changing. And recovery is hard work which can tire you out! Also, quitting smoking can change the way your body reacts to caffeine – making you more sensitive.	Try to cut down or eliminate caffeine (remember caffeine is in tea, chocolate, soft drinks, etc. – not only coffee.) Try to get on a routine of when you go to bed and when you get up.
Hungry	Nicotine does suppress appetite. Your recovery also takes energy so you may need more fuel (food).	Try low-calorie snacks like carrot sticks and apples! Try popcorn without the butter. Drink water. Try to accept that you may gain a few pounds as you quit tobacco.
Increased coughing	This is a sign that your lungs are being cleared out. A good sign but it can feel uncomfortable.	Drinking fluids really helps. Try avoiding dairy products that can create more mucous. Try sugarless cough drops. Do your best to avoid 2 <sup>nd</sup> hand smoke.
Constipated	Decreased intestinal activity as your body adjusts	Include fiber in your diet (fresh fruits, vegetables, whole grains). Drink water. Daily exercise. Consider a gentle over-the-counter laxative.
Headache	A common withdrawal symptom	Try to get plenty of rest; meditate; cold compress on your head; consider over-the-counter pain relievers.
Mouth sores	The chemistry of your mouth is changing now that you are not using any tobacco. It may seem that this is a result of use of nicotine gum or lozenge if you are using them – but this is rarely the case.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Topical medications applied directly on the sore, mouthwashes, and oral medications.</li> <li>2. Try ice chips</li> <li>3. Avoid acidic foods such as citrus fruits or spicy foods.</li> <li>4. Brush teeth gently and use a brush with soft bristles.</li> <li>5. Consult with your doctor if they persist or get worse</li> </ol>
Perspiring	Body's way of flushing out impurities. Changes in metabolism	Drink more water. Wear lighter clothing.
Increased need to urinate	Could be from all the water we are encouraging you to drink! Also it is your body's way of flushing out impurities.	Take regular bathroom breaks.
Dry mouth, sore throat or gums	Your mouth is healing and needs more fluids.	Sip ice water; fruit juice; Try some sugarless gum or lozenges.

