

Outlook on Lifestyle

DR. GOTT



Peter Gott, M.D.

Tips to help stop smoking

By Peter H. Gott, M.D.

According to The American Lung Association, about 54 million Americans smoke (33 percent of adult males, 28 percent of adult females and approximately 20 percent of all high school seniors). Blacks have a higher rate of smoking than whites. Better-educated white-collar workers are less likely to smoke. Cigarettes are the most heavily promoted product in the United States. Tobacco companies spent more than \$2 billion in advertising in 1984.

A heavy smoker can waste more than \$1,000 annually just on cigarettes. During his lifetime, he will puff away \$34,000 in extra medical bills and lost income.

The good news is that 85 percent of smokers would like to quit; one out of every three smokers tries to break the habit each year and, fortunately, people are increasingly successful in this endeavor. More than 40 million smokers have kicked the habit. Since the mid 1960s, smoking has declined in all population groups, with the notable exception of teen-age girls.

This is a welcome trend in view of the fact that cigarette-smoking is the single most important cause of preventable morbidity (sickness) and premature mortality in the United States. Cigarette addiction is a major factor in lung cancer, emphysema, chronic bronchitis, coronary artery disease, stroke, peripheral vascular disease, still-births and low birth-weight infants.

The best way to stop smoking is never to begin in the first place. (Parents take note and watch your role-modeling.) However, for those individuals who want to break the habit, several resources are available. These include: self-help books and tapes (available from The American Lung Association and in bookstores), physician counseling (often with drug

therapy, such as nicotine gum and clonidine), hypnosis and behavioral modification (such as aversive conditioning), worksite anti-smoking programs (offered by many public agencies and private companies), and group counseling (supervised by several organizations, such as the American Cancer Society and Smoke Enders.)

A person can modify his or her behavior in conjunction with one or more of the above resources. Here are some suggestions that I have modified from The American Lung Association's guidelines:

- Before you quit:
1. Change to a brand of cigarettes that you don't like.
 2. Put your cigarettes in a different place each day. Make it difficult to get them and matches/lighters.
 3. When you smoke, remove yourself from the room. Leave your workplace, the telephone, the television set and go to a different location, preferably the garage, the bathroom or out-of-doors.
 4. Take a long drag on a cigarette and hold it in for 30 seconds. Notice the bad taste. Focus on the negative sensations.
- After you quit:
5. Discard all cigarettes, ashtrays and lighters
 6. Use deep-breathing exercises to help you overcome the urge to smoke.
 7. Avoid activities — such as drinking alcoholic beverages or coffee — that may tempt you to smoke.
 8. Play with paper clips, rubber bands and other small objects to occupy your hands.
 9. Chew sugarless gum.
 10. Frequently sip water or juice.
 11. Snack on low-calorie foods, such as raw vegetables, to ease the urge to smoke.
 12. Avoid smoking after meals by brushing your teeth, using mouthwash or going for a walk.
 13. When you have a "craving attack," time how long it lasts and try to wait it out by focusing on other activities, such as work or (non-cigarette) problem-solving that may need attention.
 14. Exercise. Physical activity is a good substitute for smoking and will tide you over a "craving attack." Any sort of exercise will reduce the smoking urge and direct you toward something other than cigarettes. Exercise will also help keep your weight down and improve circulation. Regular physical activity, before or after work, for instance, will reduce nico-

tine craving and take up time that you might otherwise use for smoking.

Remember that the most successful stop-smoking programs use a variety and combination of methods. Don't limit yourself to any one technique.

Remember also that cigarettes are an unequivocal waste of money and good health. Don't be suckered in by advertising that mistakenly portrays smokers as debonaire, trim, gregarious and socially acceptable people in control of their lives. The reverse is true. Recent studies have suggested links between nicotine addiction, depression, poor self-image and lack of assertive skills. You don't want to be one of those folks, do you?



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POLLY'S POINTERS



Polly Fisher

Recall siblings in gift-giving

By Polly Fisher

DEAR POLLY — When selecting a gift for a child's birthday party, I always try to take into account whether there are younger children in the birthday child's family. If the child has a baby brother or sister, I look for an appropriate gift that does not have tiny pieces or is otherwise dangerous to the baby, since I know that it's im-

possible to keep younger siblings out of the older child's things. And if a younger sibling will be present at the party, I might pick out a token gift for that child as well, so he or she won't feel so left out of the festivities. — ALICE

DEAR ALICE — What a thoughtful mom you must be. We had a similar experience recently. My older daughter had her first real birthday party this summer and one of the mothers of a party guest chose a floor puzzle with really large pieces just so it wouldn't be a hazard to our crawling baby. I appreciated her consideration and we all enjoyed putting the big puzzle together.

DEAR POLLY — When my child does not finish her dinner, we simply put it away in the refrigerator. Then, when she invariably says she is hungry a short time later, she can eat what was left from the meal. I throw away less food, she isn't getting extra snacks and she can eat at a pace that matches her small appetite and growing body. — C.M.



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