

This Independence Day Declare Your Freedom From Nicotine Addiction



Every July 4th, Americans celebrate their independence. Commemorate this 4th of July by declaring freedom from nicotine addiction. Or encourage the smokers in your life to declare their freedom from cigarettes.

Cigarettes are designed for addiction. The design and contents of tobacco products make them addictive. They deliver more nicotine and deliver it quicker than ever before. Nicotine is the highly addictive drug in cigarettes that keeps people smoking, even when they want to quit. Like heroin or cocaine, nicotine changes the way the brain works and causes smokers to crave more and more nicotine. Filtered and low-tar cigarettes are every bit as addictive and are no safer than other cigarettes. Many teens who try cigarettes don't know how easy it is to become addicted. In fact, most smokers became addicted as teenagers.

Smokers can beat nicotine addiction. Breaking nicotine dependence is harder for some people than others, and quitting can take several tries. But smokers can and do quit. Actually, more than half of all adults who ever smoked have

succeeded in quitting. Smoking cessation can improve health: cessation lowers the risk for lung and other types of cancer; reduces the risk for coronary heart disease, stroke, and peripheral vascular disease; reduces respiratory symptoms, such as coughing, wheezing, and shortness of breath; and reduces the risk of developing chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), one of the leading causes of death in the United States.

Resources are available to help smokers quit. Different treatments work for different people. The most important thing is for smokers to try, try, and try again until they succeed. Smokers can find an effective way to quit.

Some ways to quit have been found to increase the chances of success. Quitting "cold turkey" is still the most common way people quit. Those who have trouble or want to increase their chances of success may want to get help from other ways that include brief clinical interventions, when a doctor takes 10 minutes or so to talk to smokers and give advice about quitting; counseling in individual, group, or telephone settings; nicotine replacement therapies such as nicotine gum, inhalers, nasal sprays, lozenges, or patches; and non-nicotine prescription medications such as bupropion SR (Zyban[®]) or varenicline tartrate (Chantix[®]). A combination of medication and counseling has been found to be more effective for smoking cessation than either medication or counseling alone.

Smokers can receive free resources and assistance, if needed, by calling **1-800-QUIT-NOW** (1-800-784-8669) or by visiting www.smokefree.gov.