



The
Pulse

Smoking Cessation

"If you quit one more time than you smoke, you will be successful!" - Dr. Schult

70% of all tobacco smokers have expressed the desire to quit and without this, non-smoking will never take place. Even if you are doubtful of being able to quit, there is a strong likelihood that this can change!

Before we look at some of the best methods to quit smoking, let's first understand what addiction is and why smoking can become so addictive. The following definition is used by health care professionals in reference to drugs or nicotine:

Addiction - a chronic disease, with genetic, psychosocial, and environmental factors influencing its development and manifestations. Addiction is characterized by behaviors that include impaired control over drug use, compulsive use, continued use despite harm, and craving.

So, what causes our addiction to tobacco? According to the National Institutes of Health (NIH), research has shown that the chemical nicotine is the primary reinforcing component of tobacco. Cigarette smoking results in a rapid distribution of nicotine to the brain, with levels peaking within 10 seconds of inhalation. Nicotine causes increased levels of the neurotransmitter dopamine to be released in the reward pathways of our brain, with these effects dissipating within a few minutes. Withdrawal from nicotine typically results in symptoms including irritability, craving, cognitive and attention deficits, sleep disturbances and increased appetite.

How can you quit?

From previous research studies, it has been shown that every time someone speaks with you sincerely about stopping smoking your chances of quitting improve. The duration of time that the person speaks with you is also a factor. It was found that spending 3 minutes discussing smoking cessation improved a person's chances for quitting. If 10 minutes were spent, the chances were even better. Counseling and behavioral therapies are especially effective, when it comes to problem-solving and relapse prevention. Anyone from your social community who can be enlisted in your efforts to quit can make a difference in the final outcome.

As a direct result of these findings, several smoking cessation medications are being researched with some available now such as Chantix from Pfizer, in which counseling services are provided in conjunction with medication.

There are a number of other effective medications for supporting the early months of quitting. For some people hypnotherapy, guided imagery or acupuncture works. The nicotine patch along with medications such as bupropion are more effective when used in conjunction with each other rather than using either one alone.

You will have to 'quit' every day. Over and over again. Sometimes it will be easier and sometimes it

will be harder. You will be tempted. You will tempt yourself. You might wake up from dreams in a sweat because you "relapsed" in the dream - but if you persevere you will have the chance to make a major difference in your life. Medications, counseling and peer support can't guarantee success. You do, and you can!



By: Alexander A. Schult, MD

Dr. Alexander Schult is in solo practice at Charlottesville Pulmonary Associates and also Co-Director of the Martha Jefferson Hospital Intensive Care Unit. His practice includes complete pulmonary function testing with state-of-the-art equipment administered by a registered respiratory therapist. Initial visits last one hour with follow-up visits between 15 and 30 minutes - each with complete and sincere service as well as follow-up calls. Any patients requiring admission are cared for at Martha Jefferson Hospital. Dr. Alexander Schult is a new investigator with Charlottesville Medical Research.

How can I
quit smoking?

#1 leading cause of preventable death in the United States is tobacco smoking

440,000 American deaths are attributable to cigarette smoking each year

70.3 million Americans currently use tobacco

(Source: National Institutes of Health)

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