

# How to quit smoking:

## The stages of quitting

There are five main stages of quitting smoking. It is important to understand which stage you are at, allowing you to come up with the best possible strategy going forward.

### **1. Before thinking about quitting (pre-contemplation)**

*Signs of the pre-contemplation stage*

- You are not thinking about quitting
- You feel that the pros of smoking outweigh the cons
- You may feel that quitting will be too difficult

*Moving forward*

- Read more about the dangers of smoking
- Think about how smoking affects not only yourself, but also those around you



### **2. Thinking about quitting (Contemplation)**

*Signs of the contemplation stage*

- You are interested in quitting, but you are not quite ready yet
- You understand the consequences to yourself and those around you
- You believe that your smoking is a problem that should be resolved

*Moving forward*

- Continue to read about the dangers of smoking
- Write down lists of the pros and cons of smoking



### **3. Preparation for quitting**

*Signs of the preparation stage*

- You are ready to quit smoking

*Moving forward*



- Make a list of all the times, places, and situations that you smoke
- List triggers for smoking (e.g. after a meal, work breaks)
- Use these lists to come up with ways to modify your daily routine to help you successfully quit (e.g. don't drink alcohol for a few weeks if it triggers your smoking)
- Talk to your doctor about medication and other strategies that could help
- Tell friends and family that you are ready to quit
- Read about withdrawal symptoms so that you are ready for what is ahead
- Learn from any past attempts to improve your plan for quitting
- Choose a date for quitting

#### 4. Quitting (ACTION)

##### *Signs of the action stage*

- You have properly prepared to quit smoking
- You are now actively trying to quit

##### *Moving forward*

- Use friends and family for support
- Plan short term rewards for not smoking
- Keep in mind the reasons that you decided to quit
- Remove cigarettes from your home, car, and workplace
- Understand that the most intense withdrawal symptoms will be over after 3-5 days for most people
- Stay away from your smoking triggers



#### 5. Maintenance

##### *Signs of the maintenance stage*

- You are no longer a smoker
- You are able to handle temptations and strong urges have gone away

##### *Moving forward*

- Continue to use the strategies that helped you cope without smoking
- If you slip up and have a cigarette, make sure that you learn from the mistake, and make changes so that it does not happen again
- Write down the positive changes in your life since you have stopped smoking
- Live a healthier lifestyle through regular exercise and proper nutrition

