

Week 2

YOUR FIRST WEEK WITHOUT SMOKING

A lot of the difficulties people have when they stop smoking are due to giving up the drug nicotine. This is why you are using nicotine replacement therapy, Zyban or Champix, as they will reduce some of the withdrawal symptoms.

Symptoms that you may experience in the first few days:

- **Irritable:** You may be short tempered at times.
- **Concentration:** You may find it harder than usual to concentrate.
- **Changes in mood:** You may feel more depressed than usual.
- **Appetite:** You may feel more hungry than usual.
- **Restlessness:** You may feel unsettled or "at a loose end".
- **Sleep disturbance:** Your normal pattern may change. You may experience improved or longer sleep or insomnia.
- **Other changes:** You may develop a cough or a sore mouth when you stop smoking. These are usually not serious and will go away in due course. Your health really does improve from the time you put out your first cigarette.

Coping with withdrawal symptoms and urges to smoke:

Over the years smoking becomes associated with many cues in the environment e.g. having a cigarette with coffee in the morning. Changing your lifestyle and planning small changes to your daily routines such as having breakfast or switching from coffee to orange juice can help to break these associations. Stopping smoking can be a great opportunity to take up a new hobby or activity to help to distract you and make giving up a more positive experience.

It may also help to avoid situations for a few weeks if you think you will be strongly tempted to smoke there such as going to the pub. Alternatively you could go to non-smoking places such as no smoking pubs or the cinema.

The good news is that the symptoms will go away. After about three weeks of not smoking you will start feeling more like your old self. The urge to smoke will be strong at first and come back from time to time, but you will be able to resist this urge more easily as time goes on.

Coping with daily stress:

The reason nicotine appears to reduce stress is that as a smoker you may have learned to rely on cigarettes at times of stress or upset. Try and think of other ways of managing stress such as getting some fresh air, talking to a friend or taking some deep breaths. In general, non-smokers are less stressed people than smokers.

Use your NRT

It is crucially important to appreciate that if a smoker is deprived of his/her nicotine irritability and stress can result which is why people feel that smoking relieves irritability and stress. If you use your NRT to its fullest extent then situations that might have caused stress may not do so. So, taking your NRT regularly will reduce irritability and stress. This is why non-smokers tend to be **less stressed** than smokers simply because they don't have these fluctuating nicotine levels.