



## *Women and Smoking*

**Men and women are different when it comes to quitting smoking.**

### *How are women different from men when dealing with smoking?*

1. More often, **women smoke to deal with stress and hide anger**. Many have a lot of jobs, as wives, mothers, helpers, sole providers, etc.
2. A woman's body tends to process nicotine more slowly than a man's. Although the process is slower, women have higher levels of nicotine overall than men and **women become more dependent on the nicotine**.
3. **Tobacco ads target women** by always reminding women that somehow they are not quite good enough. They encourage women to just add a cigarette, a new deodorant, or hair color to make themselves better.

### *What are some tips for a woman to quit smoking?*

1. **Time your quitting effort with your menstrual cycle** – research shows that withdrawal symptoms are worse in the latter part of the cycle and during your period. Therefore, you may want to try to stop at the end of your period to experience less intense withdrawal symptoms.
2. **Reduce your caffeine intake by half** – smoking causes caffeine to not be as effective. When you quit, if you don't cut back on soda, coffee or other caffeinated drinks, you may experience caffeine overdose causing irritability, nervousness, and tension.
3. **Learn about your addiction** - Talk with a quit coach at 1-800-QUIT-NOW or your health care providers to find out about how nicotine is affecting your body.
4. **Learn ways to make it easier on you** - Become aware of what makes you want to smoke and learn ways to help yourself when you are in one of these situations.
5. **Write down the reasons why you smoke** - Writing it down is a easy way to remind yourself of the things you need to be aware of so you can avoid them.
6. **Set a date to quit** - Work with a quit coach at 1-800-QUIT-NOW and ask family or friends to help you quit.

## *(Women and Smoking, continued)...*

### ***Are there greater risks of taking birth control pills while smoking?***

Many young women think the negative side effects of smoking and using birth control is something that happens to older women. "I'm not worried about that. I'll quit before I get any of those diseases or problems you hear about," says Jennifer, a 21-year-old student. The birth control pill may increase your chances for serious heart disease and high blood pressure, especially if you smoke.

### ***What happens to my body when I smoke?***

- When you smoke, **carbon monoxide**—the colorless, odorless, deadly gas present in car exhaust – goes right into your blood.
- You have **less oxygen** for energy because of the carbon monoxide reacting in your body.
- Nicotine **increases your heart rate**—as much as 10 to 15 beats per minute—requiring more oxygen. If you're pregnant, less oxygen reaches the fetus to help it grow and develop.
- As you continue to smoke, your body responds to the low oxygen levels by producing changes that can put you at **risk of blood clots and heart disease**.
- Women with osteoporosis seem to be at higher risk of **bone thinning** if they smoke. Smoking more quickly **decreases estrogen**, a hormone that helps protect women against osteoporosis.

### ***What are women suffering from as a result of smoking?***

We have seen a steady increase in **heart disease** among women and smoking is the number one factor that has caused this increase. Smoking causes

- ✓ increased blood clotting
- ✓ high levels of substances that narrow arteries
- ✓ limits blood flow and increases heart rate
- ✓ your heart to work harder with less oxygen to feed it

***The Good News is...*** Within one year of stopping, about half the risk of heart disease is eliminated and within 15 years, the heart disease risk for former smokers is about the same as those who have never smoked.

**Call the Tennessee Tobacco QuitLine at 1-800-QUIT-NOW.  
(1-800-784-8669) It's FREE!**