

Q. My husband is a long-time user of smokeless tobacco who has tried unsuccessfully to quit many times. How can I help him and help our 5-year-old son who is learning by watching?

A. Using smokeless tobacco is a nicotine addiction that is hard but not impossible to give up. Most people who quit do it cold turkey. The cravings are strong at first, but they lessen as time goes on. Nicotine replacement gum is available and can be a big help to many. Then you still need to taper off the nicotine gum.

Things that help include:

- 1. Exercise.** Frequent walks and engaging physical activities help keep your mind off the tobacco and help your body restore health. Most people who get seriously into physical activity are more successful at stopping. They also burn more calories so eating more food (which tastes better after stopping) is offset by the extra physical activity.
- 2. Chew something else.** Assemble an arsenal of healthy chewing items – gum, nicotine gum, carrot sticks, apple slices, soy nuts, licorice, dried fruit, sunflower seeds, mints, and other healthier items, preferably items low in calories. Keeping your mouth busy helps relieve some of the urge to chew tobacco.
- 3. Eat low-calorie foods.** Choose meals that are lower in calorie. Eat lots of fresh fruits, vegetables, legumes, soups, salads, et cetera. Be careful of meats, gravies, desserts, fast foods, restaurant meals, and other high-calorie meals. Also drink water or sugar-free drinks. Stay away from alcohol – it can sabotage your resolve to quit. Healthier meals along with more physical activity all help you prevent weight gain.
- 4. Enlist the support of friends and family.** Tell everyone you are quitting, and why. Ask for their help and understanding as you quit.



5. Get adequate sleep, and take time to relax.

Take a hot bath, read a good book, watch an enjoyable movie, visit with friends. Relaxing can help you deal with the stress of quitting and tension that can come as a result.

6. Discuss your plans with your doctor. Ask what he or she can do to help as well.

7. Don't be afraid to ask for help. Call 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669) to talk to professional counselors about quitting tobacco.

8. Review every day, or multiple times daily, why you want to quit. Explain to your young son why you want to quit and that you want to set a good example for him to be tobacco-free.

9. Think short-term. You can do this just for today. Take each day at a time. After a few days, it will get better. Each day you reach your goal you are one day closer to being a non-tobacco user for life!

10. When you are ready, set a quit date and implement your plan. Others have stopped before you. You can do it too! You may need to quit more than once. Most people who quit for good try several times until it is permanent. Don't give up. Learn from your mistakes. Keep quitting until you quit for good.

Resources for stopping use of smokeless tobacco:

National Institutes for Health, *Smokeless Tobacco: A Guide for Quitting.*
www.nidcr.nih.gov/OralHealth/Topics/SmokelessTobacco/SmokelessTobaccoAGuideforQuitting.htm

American Cancer Society, *Smokeless tobacco, How to Quit.*
www.cancer.org/acs/groups/cid/documents/webcontent/002979-pdf.pdf

Family Doctor. Org, *Smokeless Tobacco: Tips on How to Stop.*
familydoctor.org/online/famdocen/home/common/addictions/tobacco/177.html

