

Fact Sheet 15—Supporting A Loved One Who Is Trying to Quit Smoking

Quitting smoking can be extremely challenging. It's easier for people to quit smoking when other people encourage their efforts. A compassionate, understanding atmosphere is one of the main factors contributing to a smoker's triumph in quitting smoking.

How Can I Help Someone Quit Smoking?

- Be patient. Adopt a kind and consistent perspective.
- Observe your own reactions to smoking. This will make it easier for you to be less judgmental.
- Remember, this person has enjoyed smoking for many years. Respect that this relief is very genuine and necessary to them.
- Your encouraging support each day will help them stop.
- Let the person know you won't blame or judge them.
- Buy the person a book on quitting smoking (preferably one that is sympathetic and non-threatening).
- Imagine the person free from smoking.
- Find things to frequently compliment the person on.
- Live a healthier way of life yourself.
- Give the person information about medicines that can help.
- Choose to be an improved listener without leaping to judgments too fast.

More Advice to Assist a Smoker You Care About...

Friends and family members make excellent support partners. Be someone the quitter can talk to frequently. Supporting his or her efforts can make a significant difference.

Many people who are trying to quit smoking will not ask specifically for what they need in the way of support. They may believe that they can do it themselves, with no support. Or they may feel uneasy about asking for help. In a non-threatening way, you may want to offer support to someone you know who is trying to quit. Tell them that you know that quitting smoking is important to them and that you are keen to do whatever may be helpful. Ask the person to be particular about what they need to succeed. While they might not have the support of everyone, you can suggest that they spend more time with those who are supportive. Ask the person giving up to talk about the situations that they feel may be tempting so you can help them when these happen.

If the person quitting smoking is feeling stressed, gently remind them that they may have been using cigarettes to manage with awkward or uncomfortable situations. Tell them they will have to build a new ways of coping. Encourage them to ask nonsmoking friends how they deal with stressful times.

Help the person quitting smoking to stay busy. For example, you may suggest that they think of something special they would enjoy doing. Each activity can help the quitter stay occupied.

How can you help if the person quitting slips up and smokes again? It is common for people who are quitting to slip. Be understanding. Don't make the person feel bad about smoking again. As an alternative, remind them that they have been smoking for years and that a craving or tempting situation just got the better of them this time. Inform them it could take many more attempts, but it will all be worth it the day they finally become smoke-free.