The truth about STOPPING SMOKING

It is hard to know the difference between MYTHS and FACTS when it comes to stopping.
YOU DESERVE TO STOP
You deserve to stop comfortably

Stopping is scary. Many people build up various fears and worries about what will happen when they stop smoking. Fear is common, and can be limiting during the stopping process. Being informed and prepared will help you manage these concerns. Knowing the truth about some of the most common misconceptions is the first step on the path to stopping comfortably.

MYTH: But don’t I have to wait until I really want to stop before I can be successful?

FACT: Being reluctant to stop, even though you would really like to, is basically the definition of addiction. While everyone wishes they could stop, most people also wish they could just keep on smoking, only without all the problems that come along with it. This conflict can last for many years, sometimes until after a person who smokes has already gotten sick. Don’t wait until your reluctance goes away. You don’t have to “really want” to stop in order to stop successfully. Be honest with yourself and your family about how you feel and get information on stopping comfortably and effectively.

MYTH: I play bridge every week with my friends. We all smoke during the bridge game. Will I have to give up bridge and lose my friends who smoke?

FACT: Stopping smoking even when other people around you are smoking can be done, even if it’s difficult. Believe it or not, you can go to social events without smoking, but it will be tough at first. You need to give yourself time to prepare how you are going to handle the situation. You don’t have to lose your friends. You may want to tell everyone you know that you are stopping and that you need their help to succeed. You may be able to work with them to find a place where they can smoke without making it hard on you. Working together with family, friends, and co-workers can help you stop! But other people choose not to tell their friends, coworkers, or family, and instead develop strategies for success that address the challenges that arise when many people around them smoke.
MYTH: Will I gain a lot of weight when I stop smoking?

FACT: This is a very common concern among people who smoke. Not everyone gains weight when they stop smoking…

- 1/3 of those who stop smoking will gain weight.
- 1/3 will maintain their weight.
- 1/3 will lose weight.

Despite what most people think, the average weight gain after quitting is between 5 and 10 pounds.

Weight can be controlled when quitting smoking. Remember when you stop smoking, you are taking a big step towards a healthier life.

MYTH: How will I be able to deal with stress without smoking?

FACT: The truth is that the level of stress for someone who smokes is actually HIGHER than for someone who doesn’t. People who smoke only smoke for a short time during the day. During this time, they may feel relaxed. However, soon they need another cigarette. The anticipation of not smoking between cigarettes causes stress levels to go up between cigarettes. This means that people who smoke tend to experience slightly above average levels of daily stress.

To help deal with stress, try to take a short break a few times a day. Allow yourself a luxury. Take a walk, stretch, read, or visit a friend. One of the important strategies for stopping smoking successfully is developing alternative means of dealing with situations in which you used to smoke.

MYTH: Can’t I just stop cold turkey?

FACT: Some people can stop cold turkey even though this typically is a difficult and uncomfortable process. When you have an understanding about your smoking (such as routine, triggers, cues) and find tools and resources to help you, you will have a greater chance for success in staying tobacco-free. Different people need different tools to stop; if the discomfort of quitting cold turkey is going to make it difficult for you to stop successfully, then you should consider some of the other tools available, including medications, nicotine replacement, and smoking tobacco dependence groups.
MYTH: But I like to smoke. Can’t I just smoke a light cigarette, since it is safer?

FACT: Right now, there are NO safe cigarettes. Many people who smoke are misled into thinking that light cigarettes are not as harmful as other brands. Light cigarettes are lower in nicotine than regular cigarettes, but they contain the same 4000 harmful chemicals, including 400 cancer-causing chemicals. The “light” effect is achieved through air dilution using ventilation holes near the filter. Regular people who smoke who switch to these low tar and low nicotine cigarettes tend to compensate by:

- Smoking more cigarettes
- Inhaling more deeply
- Covering up the ventilation holes

Such efforts to compensate for lower levels of nicotine render the use of “light” cigarettes as an ineffective means to control nicotine dependence.