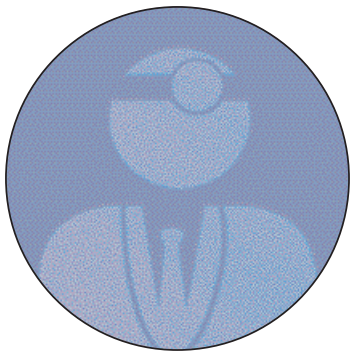

Your healthcare provider has given you this patient education handout to further explain or remind you about an issue related to your health. This handout is a general guide only. If you have specific questions, discuss them with your doctor.

NOTES:

You *Can* Quit Smoking

Patient Information

Quitting smoking is undoubtedly the toughest thing smokers must do to live healthy, long lives. Most smokers try to quit many times before they finally succeed, but studies show that each time smokers try to quit, their chances of succeeding the next time greatly improve as they learn what works and doesn't work for them. No matter what your age, your health or lifestyle, anyone *can* quit, and certain quitting techniques used alone or in combination can help break your dependence on cigarettes or other tobacco products.

Nicotine Replacement Therapy

Available in over-the-counter or prescription formulas, nicotine patches, gum, nasal sprays or inhalers deliver nicotine—the addictive substance in tobacco—into the body without many of the harmful effects of cigarettes or other tobacco products. These nicotine substitutes treat the difficult withdrawal symptoms and cravings that as many as 90% of smokers say is their only reason for not quitting.

Because your physical withdrawal symptoms are satisfied, you can focus your quitting energies on psychological withdrawal symptoms, and then gradually decrease (or "step down") your dependence on nicotine substitutes.

If you are pregnant or if you have heart or circulatory diseases, you shouldn't use nicotine replacement therapy and should choose another technique to quit smoking. You may experience mild side effects when using nicotine replacement therapy.

Medications

Zyban (bupropion) has been shown in clinical studies to help smokers quit by altering levels of certain natural chemicals in the brain, which can help reduce nicotine cravings. Zyban can be used alone or can be combined with other quitting techniques. Zyban is only available with a prescription, and if you are pregnant, have a history of seizures, anorexia or head trauma or are a heavy alcohol user, you should not use Zyban. You may experience mild to moderate side effects when using Zyban.

Support Networks

Most communities have support networks or groups for smokers who have quit or are trying to quit. Studies show that smokers who have a strong support network—friends, relatives, support groups and health care providers—have higher success rates than smokers who do not.

Ask your heath care provider about local support groups in your area or call the American Cancer Society at (800) ACS-2345 to find one. If you enroll in a program, make sure that the is session length at least 20 to 30 minutes long, that the number of sessions is at least four to seven and that the sessions span at least two weeks.

Other Techniques

Alternative therapies such as hypnosis, acupuncture and over-the-counter smoking deterrents that change the taste of tobacco have shown mixed results in clinical studies. Some people find these techniques helpful while others don't.

But once you decide to quit, your success rate might improve if you follow simple lifestyle changes such as avoiding other smokers; avoiding stressful, sad or frustrating situations or arguments; avoiding alcohol and caffeine and other factors that you associate with cigarettes or tobacco products.

Satisfy your cravings with candy or gum, drinking lots of water or juice, relaxing, striking up a conversation, exercising or walking, participating in activities that keep your hands busy and rewarding yourself each day you remain smoke-free.

Adapted from the National Cancer Society's Web site at www.cancer.org.