

Nicotine Withdrawal



About withdrawal

Going through nicotine withdrawal can be tough. As smoking affects many parts of your body, nicotine withdrawal can cause a **range of symptoms**.

It is usually worst for the first **24 - 48 hours**, then gradually declines in intensity over the next few weeks.

Withdrawal symptoms can continue for up to 30 days but they will pass. Symptoms can include:

- ▶ Cravings to smoke
- ▶ Depressed mood
- ▶ Irritability, frustration or anger
- ▶ Anxiety
- ▶ Difficulty concentrating
- ▶ Restlessness
- ▶ Insomnia
- ▶ Dizziness
- ▶ Coughing
- ▶ Increased appetite

Cravings to smoke usually only last for 5 minutes or so but they are the strongest withdrawal symptom. These cravings can last up to a month after quitting.

Managing withdrawal symptoms

To help ease your symptoms, **use nicotine replacement therapy**, like gum or lozenges, as well as patches (see the fact sheet 'Nicotine Replacement Therapy').

Also, **avoid triggers that make you want to smoke.** These triggers could include alcohol, caffeine, or spending time with friends and family while they are smoking (this could mean avoiding social activities like going to the pub for a few weeks - see fact sheet 'Managing Triggers').

Dealing with cravings

Here are some **tips to help beat the craving:**

- ▶ Use a fast acting **nicotine replacement therapy**, such as spray, gum or lozenge.
- ▶ Try the **4 D's**:
 - **Delay** acting on the urge to smoke as the craving should subside after a few minutes.
 - **Distract** yourself by going for a short walk or doing some quick exercises (this has the added benefit of boosting your mood and helping to combat weight gain). Call or text a friend, or even try imagining a different scenario than the one you are in. Another alternative is to use the MyQuitbuddy app.
 - Take **Deep** breaths.
 - **Drink** water – sip it slowly.
- ▶ It takes practice, but start to **think like a non-smoker** (e.g. "I don't smoke" rather than "I'm trying to quit").

The most important thing is to remember why you quit in the first place. Imagine yourself in years to come if you stay a non-smoker, versus if you continue to smoke. Also, remember that these methods are not foolproof or realistic for everyone. You have to keep trying different ways to find the one that works best for you.

When quitting gets tough, think about how it will get easier once you have made it through the first few days and weeks of nicotine withdrawal.

Keen to butt out your boondah? Contact us to learn more about our support programs:

Email: tis@gph.org.au | **Call:** [02] 6298 2900

Website: <https://bit.ly/ButtOutBoondah> | **Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/GPHTIS>