

Patient Handout: Withdrawal Symptoms

Description: Printable handout about tobacco withdrawal.

What Are Withdrawal Symptoms?

Nicotine is very addictive. As with drugs, when you quit smoking, withdrawal symptoms may occur. These symptoms alone show that smoking cigarettes is just as difficult to conquer as drug use. In fact, the US Surgeon General has reported that nicotine is just as addictive as heroin and cocaine.

Fortunately, the withdrawal symptoms are only temporary. They are usually the most prevalent during the first 2 weeks and are pretty much gone within a month. And although withdrawal symptoms are uncomfortable, they are minor when compared to what tobacco does to your body.

From the moment of your last cigarette, all the nicotine in your body leaves your body within 4 to 7 days, even if you have been a smoker for years. Actually, physical withdrawal symptoms are good -- they let you know that your body is repairing itself. (For example, if you get tingling or numbness in your arms and legs, it's because your circulation is getting better.)

The following are samples of withdrawal symptoms that may occur:

- Drop in pulse rate
- Craving for tobacco
- Drop in blood pressure
- Disturbance of sleep
- Slower reactions
- Tension
- Restlessness
- Depression
- Irritability
- Constipation
- Difficulty concentrating