

What are common symptoms of nicotine withdrawal?

Nicotine is a chemical compound found in a variety of plants, although it is most often associated with tobacco. Nicotine acts as a stimulant when introduced to the body through smoking and other means of ingestion. This stimulant quality makes nicotine highly addictive to people, especially smokers.

When people stop smoking, their bodies continue to physically and mentally crave the feelings nicotine created when they used to smoked. The process the body goes through as it eliminates its dependence on nicotine is called withdrawal. As a person goes through nicotine withdrawal, they will likely experience several physical and emotional changes. Withdrawal symptoms typically appear soon after a person stops smoking, and most are gone within two to three weeks of quitting.

Common symptoms of nicotine withdrawal include:

- Irritability and anger: Many people report feeling irritable or cranky when they stop smoking. These emotions typically dissipate within a few days of stopping.
- Feeling lightheaded or dizzy: A few people report feeling lightheaded right after they quit smoking. This feeling usually goes away quickly, often within two to three days.
- Increased appetite: Many people cite the fear of gaining weight as a reason they do not quit smoking, but the danger smoking poses is almost always greater than the danger of a few extra pounds. People typically have an increased appetite for several weeks after they stop smoking.
- Depression: Being depressed is a typical emotion encountered when people stop smoking. Most indicate their depressed feelings are gone within two weeks to one month.
- Lapses in concentration: Trouble focusing is a problem common to many recent ex-smokers. Most people report their ability to concentrate improves after two to three weeks.
- Trouble sleeping: Nicotine withdrawal can cause ex-smokers to experience difficulty falling asleep. Other people report waking up during the middle of the night and having trouble falling back to sleep. This symptom usually dissipates in a week or two.
- Nausea, stomach aches and constipation: Nicotine influences the digestion process, so people who quit smoking often report various stomach ailments. These problems usually go away within two to three weeks. Some people find that drinking extra water during the day helps control nicotine withdrawal-related stomach ailments.

Resources

- Nicotine Anonymous: www.nicotine-anonymous.org
- American Cancer Society: www.cancer.org
- American Lung Association: www.lung.org

Here when you need us.

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