



Tobacco Treatment: Tips for Dealing With Cravings and Other Withdrawal Symptoms

Many people have nicotine cravings and other withdrawal symptoms whenever they are not smoking or vaping, such as:

- Irritability, frustration, or anger
- Anxiety
- Trouble concentrating
- Increased appetite
- Restlessness
- Depressed mood
- Trouble sleeping

Tobacco treatment medications can help you avoid cravings and withdrawal symptoms, whether or not you want to quit. These include nicotine medications (the patch, gum, lozenges, or nasal spray), bupropion SR (Zyban or Wellbutrin), and varenicline (Chantix).

Read on to learn some tips that can help you manage cravings and withdrawal symptoms when you want to avoid smoking or vaping.

Trigger: Being around people who smoke or vape

Ways to cope:

- Tell loved ones you are making a change and ask for their support.
- Ask friends or family members if they also want to change their smoking or vaping, especially if they live with you.
- Avoid taking breaks at work or school with people who smoke or vape. Choose to take a walk outside or a break at a different time.

Trigger: Feelings that make you want to smoke or vape

Ways to cope:

- Anxiety, irritability, restlessness, and cravings are all nicotine withdrawal symptoms, so using a fast-acting medication such as nicotine lozenges or gum may help.
 - Reducing your caffeine intake can also help. Cutting back on smoking affects how your body processes caffeine, so the same amount of caffeine will have a larger effect.
- If you feel anxious or irritable, physical activity (such as taking a walk, going outside, deep breathing, or meditation) can help.
- If you feel restless or can't concentrate, distract yourself with a simple task, such as eating a healthy snack, chewing gum, drinking water, talking to a friend, or taking a walk.



Trigger: Drinks or food that makes you want to smoke or vape

Ways to cope:

- If you drink coffee, hold your cup in the hand you usually hold your cigarette or vape in. You can also switch to tea or another drink.
- Try avoiding alcohol the first few weeks you are changing your smoking or vaping. If you are at a place that serves alcohol, try drinking seltzer, juice, or a soft drink.

Trigger: Places and situations that remind you of smoking or vaping

Ways to cope:

- Avoid stores where you usually buy cigarettes or vapes. Try taking different routes so you don't pass those stores.
- If you usually smoke or vape at home, try changing where you sit or rearranging the room to help break the routine.
- If you usually smoke or vape at specific times, try changing your routine (such as taking another walking route or a work break at a different time) or using a distraction technique (such as focusing on your breathing, doodling or coloring, or counting things around you).

What issues or situations trigger cravings or withdrawal symptoms for you? Refer to the example triggers above to make a plan:

Issues or situations that trigger cravings or withdrawal symptoms for me:	I will cope by:

Treatment Resources Are Available, Whether or Not You Want to Quit

Tobacco treatment medications can help you:

- Cut back on or quit smoking
- Avoid smoking or vaping when you want to (such as when you are at work or with family), even if you are not ready to quit

To learn more about options and how to access support, visit nyc.gov/nycquits.