

Stop Smoking Today

*****Stop Smoking Today (Part 1)*****

Narrator

The history of human involvement with Tobacco can be traced back 18,000 years. In those days, tobacco was celebrated for its medicinal and ritualistic characteristics, especially among Native Americans. It was in the 1700's when the tobacco crop grew into what we know today, the cigarette. And over the years, smoking cigarettes became more and more a part of fashionable American society.

Mary Ella Douglas, American Lung Association

Smoking back then was seen as glamorous or cool, the thing to do. I remember seeing commercials on television about doctors saying, "smoke to cure your cough." It was socially acceptable. It was expected, certainly of most men and even women.

Narrator

Thanks to advertisements, and social pressures, nearly half of the population smoked cigarettes, and they smoked due to a very addictive substance found in tobacco.

Andrew Cuddihy, MPH, American Lung Association

Nicotine is a poison from the family of poisons known as alkaloids, it's a type of chemical. The tobacco plant over millions of years went to a lot of trouble to create a very effective insecticide so they can deposit that in its own tissues, so that when a bug ate tobacco, it would die.

Narrator

Nicotine is considered the most commonly abused substance in the world. And it has a powerful effect on the brain.

Andrew Cuddihy, MPH, American Lung Association

Nicotine causes a sensation of good will. It causes a person to feel relaxed and basically have an experience where they're feeling good. This is different from the experience that the body is having. The way it makes a person feel emotionally, mentally, is a very different thing than what's going on in their body at the same exact time. So where smokers would describe their experience with nicotine as relieving stress, for the body, it's actually causing stress.

Paula Mathis, 51 year old, Ex-Smoker

I remember times when I might have, had like I said, something going on that would just unnerve me and I would smoke a cigarette and it would calm me.

Narrator

51-year-old mother of four, Paula Mathis, loves spending time with her dog Eddie and chilling out to her favorite tunes in the kitchen. For most of her adult life, Paula smoked, a habit she picked up close to home.

Paula Mathis, 51 year old, Ex-Smoker

I started smoking because of convenience. My father smoked and I knew where he hid his cigarettes, and I watched people, friends at school smoke and I was just curious, easy access.

Narrator

Paula's cigarette addiction became a routine part of life, especially her social life.

Paula Mathis, 51 year old, Ex-Smoker

You could sit and just smoke a pack of cigarettes, you know if you were out for hours at a club or something, you could smoke a pack of cigarettes and you didn't even realize you were doing it because, you know, it was part of the social aspect.

Narrator

Each year, nearly half a million Americans die due to complications from tobacco use, including cigarettes, pipes, cigars, smokeless tobacco or snuff, and chewing tobacco.

When we come back, we'll take a look at the American Lung Association's Three-Link Chain of Addiction and later in the program, identify ways people can be free from smoking, for good.

*******Stop Smoking Today (Part 2)*******

Narrator

Tobacco use accounts for 1/3rd of all cancer deaths in this country. Including deaths due to:

- Lung cancer
- Cancers of the throat and mouth
- Heart disease
- Stroke
- Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease or COPD and
- Emphysema

Andrew Cuddihy, MPH, American Lung Association

Lung cancer, that's the disease. Heart attacks, that's the disease. But we've come to recognize the fact, the disease that we're talking about is indeed Nicotine Addiction. And all these things, lung cancer, emphysema, heart disease, you know, stroke, those are outcomes of the disease called Nicotine Addiction.

Ivan Montoya, MD, MPH, National Institute on Drug Abuse

If someone is addicted to narcotics or is addicted to nicotine, the brain is addicted. The brain doesn't distinguish between one addiction or another. In terms of the medical consequences and psychological consequences there are differences.

Niki Karantoni, 50 year old, Current Smoker

To a non-smoker, they can never understand, 'oh, why do you smoke?'

Narrator

New Jersey hair stylist and mother of two, Niki Karantoni, has been smoking cigarettes for over 35 years.

Niki Karantoni, 50 year old, Current Smoker

Through my years, at age 20, 25, 30, I was a normal smoker. Pack, pack and a half, not even. Toward my late 30's I would say (I smoked) a pack and a half. After my 30's, I mean, I got close to smoking 4-5 packs a day.

Narrator

Niki's addiction started as a way to fit in with the other kids and by watching her older brother and sister smoke.

What Niki didn't know, at the time, was how powerful nicotine addiction was. As she continued to smoke to fit in, she found herself craving the cigarette even more.

Andrew Cuddihy, MPH, American Lung Association

It's a very powerful drug. And people think of nicotine often times as a baby drug, a play drug, and it's not.

Narrator

When a person lights up and inhales, the nicotine and more than four thousand other chemicals are absorbed into the body within 7 to 11 seconds.

Mary Ella Douglas, American Lung Association

The cigarette contains over 4,300 chemicals, and 69 of those are known to be carcinogens or cancer causing additives. Things like formaldehyde, arsenic, things you would never ever choose to ingest in your body.

Andrew Cuddihy, MPH, American Lung Association

One of the things that cigarette smoke does is it inhibits the lungs ability to clean itself. So the cilia that beat back and forth that clean your lungs those cilia kind of go dormant for a number of reasons, they get covered up in mucus and they can stop beating. So that stuff kind of sits there.

Narrator

Habit or routine drive the tobacco addiction. Smokers often times smoke while doing the same things every day, driving and smoking, talking on the phone and smoking, drinking coffee and smoking, and just being around other smokers promotes smoking. Smokers are on autopilot when it comes to smoking, in that, they light up without even thinking about it.

Niki Karantoni, 50 year old, Current Smoker

The habit beats the control. It's an uncontrolled addiction, you can't control it, you can't.

Narrator

Researchers have divided addiction up into three categories. The American Lung Association likes to call this The Three-Link Chain of Addiction.

Mary Ella Douglas, American Lung Association

That includes the physical addiction to nicotine, the mental addiction to smoking where people connect smoking with certain everyday behaviors that they do all the time. There are a lot of behaviors that smokers can't imagine doing without a cigarette in their hand. And then the 3rd link in this chain of addiction is the social part. A lot of people start smoking to become part of a group, or once they are smokers, they'll take breaks with their smoking buddies.

Narrator

Paula Mathis tried quitting several times, after a neighbor developed a smoking related illness.

Paula Mathis, 51 year old, Ex-Smoker

My neighbor who was 2 doors up from me had emphysema and I remember him showing me a picture of a lung and I was like "oh my God, is this what my lungs look like?" I've been smoking since I was 16 years old. So that scared me.

Narrator

Tobacco users may try several different approaches to quitting, searching for one that actually works for them. But the truth is, most smokers actually succeed only after they've tried and failed several times.

When we come back, we'll show you how it is possible to become tobacco free today, and stay that way for life!

*******Stop Smoking Today (Part 3)*******

Narrator

Most smokers need to practice quitting several times before they actually succeed.

Andrew Cuddihy, MPH, American Lung Association

One of the most common errors I see among people trying to quit is that really they haven't done any thinking about it, they haven't really done any thought about it. Their thoughts were, I'm going to quit on Tuesday or I'm going to try to quit and really that's the only effort that they've put into it.

Narrator

Researchers suggest that tobacco users prepare a detailed quit plan and look at the three aspects of addiction. Look at how you're going to deal with the physical aspect of addiction, the mental side of addiction, and the socio-cultural issues associated with this addiction.

Dennis Penzell, DO, FACP, CTTS, Nova Southeastern University

Most of them don't understand that this is, in fact, a chemical addiction; they don't understand that this is not a failure of their will or a failure of them being unable to pick themselves up by their bootstraps and throw it away.

Narrator

Over the years, several therapies have developed a proven track record of success. Over the counter treatments like Nicotine Replacement Therapies or NRTs work well for many. The most common FDA approved NRTs are:

- Nicotine Gum
- Nicotine Patch and
- Nicotine Lozenge

Andrew Cuddihy, MPH, American Lung Association

One of the biggest mistakes I see that people make using NRT is they use it wrong. First of all, read the instructions, don't throw the box out when you get it. In order for an NRT to be successful, at least the gum, you have to chew it and then park it between your cheek and gum and that's where you absorb the nicotine. If you just chew the gum like a regular gum and you're swallowing the juices, all you're going to do is give yourself an expensive case of nausea.

The second type of NRT or Nicotine replacement therapy, and probably the most commonly used today is the nicotine transdermal patch.

Narrator

Commonly used Nicotine Replacement Therapy prescription medications are the Nicotine Inhaler and the Nicotine Nasal Spray. Also, non-nicotine containing prescription medications are available.

Mary Ella Douglas, American Lung Association

One is Bupropion, that's in pill form and it's really a non-nicotine substance that really helps the pleasure and pain centers of the brain. Varenicline is also available and that's a non-nicotine product as well.

Narrator

Paula Mathis tried to quit several times on her own, but was never fully successful. She kept at it though and eventually succeeded.

Paula Mathis, 51 year old, Ex-Smoker

I joined the Gospel choir and started singing and noticed that I couldn't breathe. When you start singing, you start to realize just how important your lungs are. I need help. I've got to stop smoking, this is killing me. I really felt like it was killing me, and so I prayed. I had a talk and I prayed and I said, 'God please you gotta help me. I don't want to smoke, I don't want to smoke anymore!'

Narrator

Paula credits divine intervention with helping her quit and stay tobacco free. And since she gave up cigarettes she's enjoying the sights and smells of life much more.

Paula Mathis, 51 year old, Ex-Smoker

I learned something about myself through each failure. What I learned is that I am the kind of person that I can't do it gradually, I have to do it or don't.

So things look prettier, flowers smell sweeter. I can smell everything.

Narrator

While Paula's experience is genuine, most successful quitters use a variety of approaches.

Andrew Cuddihy, MPH, American Lung Association

The use of any one therapy is not the best way to go. The most effective means of cessation is a combination of combining some kind of behavioral therapy with an FDA approved drug therapy.

Narrator

The American Lung Association offers a National tobacco cessation program, Freedom From Smoking, to help individuals quit smoking through self and stress management, lifestyle changes, and social support.

Many cities around the country offer tobacco cessation programs and quit-lines. Programs like Quit Smoking Now have been successful in South Florida. Programs like Freedom From Smoking and Quit Smoking Now also help people identify triggers that may lead smokers back to the addiction.

Andrew Cuddihy, MPH, American Lung Association

Someone will get past, you know, the first couple of days and then usually what happens is, there will be a trigger, an environmental trigger. For example, you might have a group of friends that you always smoke with, or you always smoke when you get stressed about certain things at work, or you always smoke when you have a fight with your spouse.

Narrator

These triggers can lead ex-smokers back to tobacco again. Other things that can lead smokers back to smoking are withdrawal symptoms, things like:

- Irritability
- Insomnia
- Fatigue
- Lack of concentration
- and possible weight gain

Mary Ella Douglas, American Lung Association

Basically the average weight gain from quitting smoking is about 7 pounds, so if someone is gaining more than 7-10 pounds after they've quit smoking, they are reaching for high calorie, probably high sugar, probably high fat foods.

Narrator

Often, smokers are told to quit for health reasons. That's what happened to hair stylist, Niki Karantoni.

Niki Karantoni, 50 year old, Current Smoker

They told me I had emphysema. They found a nodule on my lung. I said, 'Well, it's time to quit.'

Narrator

Niki hasn't tried medication. Instead she's been using alternative therapies. She hasn't been successful yet, but she is still determined to quit, for herself and for her children.

Niki Karantoni, 50 year old, Current Smoker

I have two wonderful kids and my job as a mother is not done yet, it's not finished. Both of them still need me so I don't see me going anywhere for a long time yet.

Narrator

The American Lung Association suggests behavioral modifications in addition to effective FDA approved therapies to help tobacco users fully break the habit. They don't advocate any alternative therapies, at this time.

Up next, a word about second hand smoke and a look at what parents' tobacco use does to their children.

*******Stop Smoking Today (Part 4)*******

Narrator

Florida Resident, Aimee Kurry, had quit several times before but was never able to stay tobacco free. When she found out she was pregnant she quit again, but the stress of being a new mom became too much for her. That stress was a trigger that led her back to smoking.

Aimee Kurry, 31 year old, Ex-Smoker

When I decided to quit for the baby, I quit for the baby. I never thought of it as short term quitting, but I certainly didn't think of it as long term quitting.

Narrator

Aimee went back to smoking, but never around her son, Andrew. But researchers say that's not good enough. Parents who smoke are doing harm to their children mostly because of second hand smoke.

Second-hand smoke has become a public health problem. There is no safe level of second hand smoke. Parents should avoid bringing your child into a public place where smoking is allowed and keeping others, including babysitters and caregivers from smoking around the child. Research has proven that second hand smoke can cause lung cancer, respiratory issues, and even death.

Mary Ella Douglas, American Lung Association

It is so important for those parents not to smoke around the child, certainly in the home or in the automobile, in an enclosed space around that child. Ear infections are a common example of a symptom that children get or problems they have from second-hand smoke. There's a greater risk of asthma because of second hand smoke, and we also know that the greatest predictor of a child to start smoking is to have smoking parents.

Andrew Cuddihy, MPH, American Lung Association

The thing to note about tobacco smoke is what we call a complex mixture, complex compound in that's both gaseous and particles. These particles go out into the air and because they are particles and they have weight they land on things. And they can be breathed in by people.

Narrator

Although Aimee never smoked around Andrew, she knew she needed to quit for good once her mother developed a smoking related illness.

Aimee Kurry, 31 year old, Ex-Smoker

My mother has lung cancer, and thank God she's decided to quit after she found out, but you know she already found out she has lung cancer and has had to go through 2 surgeries, chemotherapy, lose her hair, radiation, give up her career. Watching her go through all of that, I can't even describe in words how devastating that's been. I never want Andrew to have to watch me, or have to feel what I felt or have been feeling watching my mom battle lung cancer. If me quitting smoking can prevent that, then that's a really good reason for me.

Narrator

Aimee signed up for Quit Smoking Now, a 6-week tobacco cessation program.

Aimee Kurry, 31 year old, Ex-Smoker

It's been about 5 months now since I've been smoke free and I feel good.

I feel a difference from this time than previous experiences because I feel that I'm set up mentally to be a non-smoker forever.

In the past I thought about quitting smoking, I'm going to quit smoking. I didn't think about how I'm going to remain a non-smoker.

Narrator

Quitting tobacco is one of the healthiest things you can do for yourself and your family. If you've tried to quit and were unsuccessful, try again. Quitting is not easy, but with help, it doesn't need to be painful. Search out a smoking cessation program in your area or call a quit line. There are people there that can help you step by step to becoming smoke free.

© **The Wellness Network**