

Quitting Spit Tobacco

The Cessation Process 7 Steps to Recovery

Step One: Decide to Quit and Make a List of Reasons Why Knowing your reasons for quitting will help you make it through the tough situations when cravings and temptation to use spit tobacco are high. Start your cessation process by making a list of all the special reasons in your life to be tobacco free. For example, you'll save money, make your friends and family very happy, clean up your breath, set a good example for your kids, and avoid serious health problems like oral cancer.

Step Two: Set a Date It is important to set a clearly-defined quit date no more than two weeks after you decide to quit. Even if you think you can quit now, wait at least a week so that you can get prepared.

Step Three: See a Health Care Provider Prior to your quit date, visit your health care provider for an oral exam and to inquire about nicotine replacement therapy. Nicotine replacement can be useful after you quit to help ease withdrawal symptoms, but always remember never to use nicotine patches or gum in combination with tobacco products of any kind.

Step Four: Taper Off and Change Your Routine While some people are able to quit spit tobacco "cold turkey", others find that cutting back in their spit tobacco use and changing some aspects of their behavior and lifestyle makes it easier. In the week or two before your quit date, consider:

- Switching to a lower nicotine content brand of spit tobacco;
- Taking only half the amount of spit tobacco you normally consume with every dip;
 - Systematically reducing the number of dips you take per day;
 - Noticing where and when you dip the most;
 - Finding other things to do at those places and during those times; and
- Using oral substitutes like sunflower seeds or sugarless gums or hard candies to get you through cravings.

Think about how you will cope with the urge to use spit tobacco after you quit, and practice responding in your thoughts and actions to these urges.

Step Five: Build A Support Team Build a support team that includes your friends, family, and a health care provider. Let them know that you are quitting and tell them your quit date. Enlist their help in the process! Your support team can help by encouraging you if you slip, by giving you a pat on the back when you meet your goal each day, and by being patient with any irritability you may have from nicotine withdrawal during the first week you are tobacco free.

Step Six: Your Quit Day Make this day different and special! Change your daily routines to break tobacco triggers, chew non-tobacco substitutes like sugarless gum or sunflower seeds if you need them, and stay busy and active all day. Exercise and drinking lots of water will help take your mind off tobacco, and will help curb your appetite. Fall back on the new action and thought responses that you practiced earlier in the two

weeks to get you through the cravings. Remember that each urge to chew lasts only 3-5 minutes - you can get through the craving with deep breathing exercises and keeping busy.

Step Seven: Staying Off Spit Tobacco Depending on how much you curbed your use prior to your quit date, the next two weeks might be pretty tough. But don't give up - nicotine withdrawal symptoms decrease dramatically after the first two weeks. After a month, you'll feel better than ever. If you find that withdrawal is just too much to bear, consult your health care provider. Remember your reasons for quitting and let them strengthen your intention to become tobacco-free. Anticipate hard situations and plan ahead how you will deal with them. For example, if you usually dipped or chewed while hanging out with friends, or while playing sports, think hard beforehand about how you will deal with the urge to chew when you engage in these activities now.

A good thing to remember during the toughest moments of withdrawal and temptation to use is the following acronym for DEAR:

Delay: If you can wait another 30 minutes before taking a dip, or if you can put dipping out of your mind by doing something else and thinking positive thoughts, the urge may pass.

Escape: When feeling irritable from nicotine withdrawal and presented with a confrontation, consider walking away from the source and doing something else for a minute or two, like washing your face and hands.

Avoid: Stay away from situations where the temptation to use is high until you are confident you can remain tobacco-free. If you can't avoid these high risk situations, then plan ahead what you will do instead of dipping so that you will be able to resist the temptation to use.

Reward: Give yourself a reward (other than dipping!) every day you stay tobacco free.