

TIPS FOR NEW NONSMOKERS

Depression

What are the signs of depression?

Depression is more than feeling sad or having a bad day. People with depression usually have five or more of the following symptoms for two weeks or longer:

- Feeling sad and tired
- Not wanting to do things they used to enjoy
- Feeling easily frustrated and restless
- Experiencing sleep problems
- Eating more or less than they used to
- Having trouble concentrating
- Feeling worthless
- Thinking about dying or hurting themselves

What causes depression?

There are many factors that increase a person's chance of getting depressed. Everyone is different, but here are some common risk factors:

- Feeling lots of stress
- Going through a difficult life event
- A big life change, even if it was planned
- Medical problem
- Taking a medication that is known to cause depression
- Using alcohol or drugs
- Having blood relatives who have had depression

Is it common to feel depressed after quitting smoking?

It is common to feel irritable, restless, down or blue after quitting, but these feelings usually get better in one to two weeks. If you find that they last longer, you should talk about it with friends or family, and also call your doctor.

If I get depressed, should I start smoking again?

No. Remember that smoking is linked to many serious health problems for both smokers and people around them. Finding ways to help your depression while you stay smokefree is the best way to go.

How long does depression last?

Everyone is different. For many people, depression is only a problem during really stressful times (like a divorce or the death of a loved one) and it goes away when the

stress lifts. For others, depression is a chronic condition that occurs off and on through their life. For both groups, treatment can help reduce the symptoms and shorten how long the feelings last.

What are the treatments for depression?

There are many good treatments for depression, and more than eight out of every 10 people who use them get better. Treatment usually means getting psychotherapy/ counseling, taking medications, or doing both. Your doctor or a qualified mental health professional can help you figure out what treatment is best for you.

Are there things I can do myself to relieve depression?

There are many things you can do to help lift your mood. Here are a few of them:

- Stay active. Take a fast walk, go to the gym, or join a team sport. The type of exercise you choose should depend on how fit you are, but any kind of activity can help.
- Create a plan to stay busy every day. Get out of the house whenever you can.
- Don't cut yourself off from other people. Daily contact with others will help your mood.
- Find ways to give yourself small rewards, such as going to a movie or taking a long walk with a friend. Small things can add up and can help your mood.
- Do what used to be fun, even if does not seem fun right now. It may take a little time, but doing fun activities again will help improve your mood. Make a list of fun events and try to do at least one a day.
- Talk about your feelings with loved ones and close friends. Their support is a key to your feeling better, and sharing concerns can help them seem less scary.

Source: www.smokefree.gov

For free one-on-one help with quitting and free printed materials from the National Cancer Institute, call the NCI's Smoking Quitline at 1-800-QUITNOW (784-8669). A helpful online resource is www.smokefree.gov.



The Kentucky Cancer Program coordinates the Cooper/Clayton Method to Stop Smoking program in collaboration with community partners.