

## Section 4.

# How tough it can be to quit nicotine



*It's just one time...*

"I'll try vaping just once," you think to yourself. "What's the harm in doing it one time? It's not like I'm going to get addicted."

Young people who use vapes with nicotine can develop an addiction. The more someone vapes, the more their brain and body become accustomed to nicotine, making it harder to quit.

Nicotine is the chemical that makes tobacco products so addictive. Nicotine is highly addictive even after just a few tries, especially for youths' developing brains. It is as addictive as heroin or cocaine.

As you introduce nicotine to your body, you will begin to crave more. Vaping, smoking cigarettes and other forms of tobacco that contain nicotine (like cigars, pipes, chewing tobacco and nicotine pouches) can lead to nicotine dependence.

### **Nicotine in your body**

Nicotine is found naturally in the tobacco leaf. It is present in tobacco products such as cigarettes and in most e-liquid. When you smoke, nicotine is absorbed through the lungs and then moves through the bloodstream and into the brain and other organs of the body.

It can take as little as 10 seconds for nicotine to reach the brain after being inhaled. When you first start to vape or smoke:

- you may cough, feel dizzy and get a dry, irritated throat
- you can also feel nauseous, weak, get stomach cramps, headache, and gag

That will stop as your body becomes more dependent on nicotine, and then each time you vape or smoke:

- your heart rate and blood pressure will increase
- your blood vessels constrict (tighten), causing your hands and feet to feel cold
- your brain waves become altered, and muscles relax

### **How your body becomes dependent on nicotine**

Nicotine may cause you to temporarily feel good or energized. It also causes the release of natural chemicals in your brain that may make you feel more alert and calm. Over time, your body builds a tolerance to some of the effects of nicotine. This means you need more and more nicotine to have the same effect.

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### Withdrawal

When you stop smoking or vaping, the nicotine levels in your body drop and you may have withdrawal symptoms. It is good to know that these symptoms are temporary and are often signs your body is healing.

Withdrawal symptoms can be difficult to cope with, and many people who smoke and people who vape might not be able to quit on their first try because they are not prepared. If you know what to expect you can think of ways to manage the symptoms.

Most withdrawal symptoms happen within the first week. Symptoms are usually gone after two to four weeks.

Withdrawal symptoms may include:

- dizziness and shakiness
- headaches
- anxiety and irritability
- nervousness and restlessness
- difficulty concentrating and sleeping
- increased appetite
- slight depression or feeling down
- cravings for a smoke or to vape

Side effects, like tiredness and coughing, show that your body is in a state of repair and healing.

You may crave cigarettes or to vape for months, even once the other withdrawal symptoms are gone. The desire to vape or smoke can be especially strong when you are under stress, although some people crave cigarettes or to vape when out with friends or when bored.

### Dependence and addiction

When you experience tolerance and withdrawal, this is a sign that your body is physically dependent on nicotine. "Addiction" and "dependence" are not the same thing. Addiction occurs when you lose control over the urges to smoke or vape, even when you know it's bad for you and want to quit.