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NEVER TAKE ANOTHER PUFF!

40 Years of Progress?

I am attaching an article below from the January 19, 2004 issue of TIME magazine. It talks about the decline in smoking rates in America since the original release of the U.S. Surgeon General's report in January of 1964. The author was apparently led to believe that a whole lot more quitters would be successful if they would just stop trying to go cold turkey and use the many quitting aids available that can "double a person's chance of success."

One thing I want to comment on is how the article points out that smoking declined from 42% to 23% in the past 40 years, but how the drop-off stalled in 1990. The dates are interesting.

The article is saying that there are a whole lot more effective ways to quit than by going cold turkey. It is basically talking about NRT products and Zyban. What is interesting is that almost all of these products came into widespread use in the 1990's--the years where the rapid decline in smoking cessation actually stopped.

Nicotine gum was first approved for use in America in 1984, by prescription only. In 1991 and 1992, four patches were approved for prescription use. In 1996 all controls broke loose--the gum and two of the four patches went over-the-counter and Zyban (bupropion) was just coming into the fray.

So now we have all of these miracle products available, many without prescription. If these products were so good at increasing success, and if they are being used by so many people, you would think that smoking rates would be plummeting now when compared to when people just had to rely on their own resolve to quit.

Again, read the following line from the article below:

"The drop-off in smoking stalled in 1990 and has hardly budged since then."

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Lets hope not too many miracle products for smoking cessation get introduced in the future as it may result in skyrocketing smoking rates.

The real way to once again increase the long-term success rate of people trying to quit is to help them to understand that they are fighting an addiction to nicotine, and that to win that fight and to stay free forever is as simple as making and sticking to a commitment to Never Take Another Puff!

Joel

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YOURTIME/HEALTH

Stub Out That Butt!

**But don't try to go it alone.
Here are some tricks that make it easier to quit**

**By CHRISTINE GORMAN
Monday, Jan. 19, 2004**

More than 42% of adult Americans smoked when the first Surgeon General's Report on Smoking and Health was published. Today, 40 years later, fewer than 23% do. That's good news, but it could be better; a lot better. The drop-off in smoking stalled in 1990 and has hardly budged since then. Surveys show that 70% of tobacco users want to quit, but kicking the nicotine habit isn't easy.

What a lot of smokers don't realize is that the most popular method of quitting; just stopping, a.k.a. going cold turkey; is the least effective. Studies show that getting intensive short-term counseling, taking drugs like Zyban (an antidepressant) or using one of the many nicotine aids (gum, patch, inhaler, nasal spray, lozenge) all double the chance of success. Preliminary results suggest that combining these methods will increase success rates even more.

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The trick is to find out what works best for you. For counseling, you don't have to go into full-fledged psychoanalysis; you can pick up practical strategies from various quit-smoking telephone hotlines (for a list of numbers as well as tips, visit smokefree.gov). As for nicotine products, make sure you're using them the right way. You need to chew the gum slowly, for example, not swallowing the saliva until the nicotine can be absorbed through the cheek, says Dr. Elliot Wineburg, who has used everything from drugs to hypnosis at Mount Sinai Medical Center in New York City to help hard-core smokers quit. Many people try to make do with as little nicotine as possible, which is a mistake. "You don't want the brain to go into withdrawal," Wineburg says.

It's never too late to quit. As the years go by, an ex-smoker's risk of heart disease and stroke diminishes until it's essentially the same as that of a person who has never smoked, says Dr. Corinne Husten of the Centers for Disease Control's Office on Smoking and Health. Alas, the risk of lung cancer never quite gets down to what it would have been without smoking. "Even with cancer, people respond better to chemotherapy if they quit," Husten says. Best of all, of course, would be not to take up the habit in the first place.

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Page created October 18, 2004 and last updated by [Joel Spitzer](#) on November 9, 2004

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