

What Worked for Me

You know the saying “three times a charm”? Well I finally figured out a plan that worked for me! I found a personal vaporizer, flavor and nicotine level that helped to control my cravings. I also began to use more of the gum at work, or in other places where vaping isn’t allowed. I have now been smoke-free for nine months. It took a little time to find what worked for me, and I want to emphasize that what worked for me might not work for you. With so many options out there, the important thing is to never stop trying. If one method does not work for you, try something else.

The most important things I learned were:

- 1** Nicotine is what makes you addicted. It is not what kills you.
- 2** Don’t worry about the nicotine in medications or e-cigs. They are tools to quit smoking. Even if you use the nicotine medications for a long time it is better than smoking, because you would not get all of the bad chemicals in cigarettes and tobacco smoke.
- 3** Nicotine medications and e-cigarettes will help cut down your urges. They do not magically make all of your urges go away.
- 4** There are also non-nicotine medications out there that seem to work for many smokers, but they require a prescription from your doctor.



Produced by

The Tobacco Research and Intervention Program at Moffitt Cancer Center

Funded by

Grants from the National Institutes of Health (R01CA134347; R01DA037961)

1 (877) 954-2548

ProjectEASE@Moffitt.org

The content is solely the responsibility of the authors and does not necessarily represent the official views of the National Institutes of Health



© 2016 Moffitt Cancer Center. All rights reserved.

SMGP 5/2016

The people depicted in this series were inspired by real individuals, but the particulars were changed to protect their privacy.



A FOREVER FREE CLOSE-UP

“How I Quit Smoking”

Joe's Story

FOREVER
FREE®

The Old Me

Hi, my name is Joe and I am a 46 year old store manager. I smoked a pack a day for 24 years. I can honestly say that cigarettes were a big part of my life. They were there during every big event in my life; graduation, wedding, my mom's funeral. I wanted to quit smoking but I had never really been able to. I could only go without smoking if I happened to be too sick to smoke.

I guess things changed for me after my 45th birthday. I started to look at my life and wonder what was in store for the years ahead. Even though I wanted to quit smoking in the past, I think the feeling was much stronger this time.



My Attempts

My first attempt was cold turkey. I've always believed that when I put my mind to something, I could do it. I nearly made it all day. After dealing with a difficult customer, I went straight to the corner store and bought a pack of cigarettes.

Normally, I would just smoke to help deal with a difficult customer, so I'm sure it didn't help that I hadn't smoked that day. I was already on edge to begin with.

I realized it wasn't going to be easy to just throw away the cigarettes and depend on my willpower alone. That's when I began my search for the best way to get help. I had friends who quit smoking, so I called some of them to see what worked for them. It turned out that everyone tried something different. Some quit by using nicotine patches, others used e-cigarettes, and a co-worker quit with a prescription quit-smoking medication. I also looked for quit-smoking treatments on the Internet and came across different quit aids. I had no idea that there were so many options out there for smokers!

I have seen friends using e-cigarettes. I have also heard of the nicotine patch and the nicotine gum. I didn't know about the nicotine lozenge, inhaler, and nasal spray. There are also two different kinds of pills (Zyban and Chantix) that you can take.

Some of these, you can get over the counter. Others require you to get a prescription. I liked the idea of switching to an



e-cigarette to ease my way to quitting. I also thought nicotine gum would help me in places where vaping was not allowed, and it sounded good to have something in my mouth other than cigarettes to chew on. I did have some concerns though. Part of me wondered "If I'm quitting nicotine, should I really put it in my body in another form?"

I also wondered if I could get addicted to nicotine medications or the e-cigarette.

I actually made it five days without smoking. It was the longest I had ever gone.

By the end of the week, the gum and my first e-cigarette just weren't working for me. I was still having a lot of strong urges to smoke. I started to wonder if I was doing something wrong, so I called a friend who quit smoking by switching to

vaping. He told me that refillable tank e-cigs work better than cigalikes, because you get a better nicotine hit and can control how much nicotine you use. My friend also suggested that I start with a higher level of nicotine and cut back over time. I also wasn't using the gum as much as I should have while at work, for a pack a day smoker. By not using e-cigs and gum correctly, I wasn't really giving them a chance to work.

