

Question: I've been smoking for a long time and have tried unsuccessfully to quit in the past. Is there any hope for me if I try again?

Answer: There is definitely a good chance that you will be successful in your effort to stop smoking, if you try again. Many people try 4 or more times before they reach their goal- **to stop smoking for life**. Those previous attempts are valuable and have given you insights into your particular triggers and how to recognize the most difficult times in nicotine withdrawal. These experiences add to the preparation for your next effort.

It is a very good idea to get ready for your next try by doing an assessment of your smoking habits to determine underlying patterns and to identify stressors that prompt smoking. Next step in the plan is to identify a strong motivation for quitting. Whether it is the real fear of being diagnosed with cancer or heart disease or a desire to be healthier, financial gain or any personal reason you may have, it is essential to have it very clear in your mind for the difficult moments. It must be there for instant retrieval as a powerful reinforcement to carry you through the tough times and to stay the course. Picture the rewards and benefits of not smoking.

There have been advances in the science of nicotine withdrawal and more help is available currently. The proven success of the nicotine patch, gum, lozenges, nasal spray and inhalers, used individually or in combinations are now more successful. The FDA has approved two medications to assist in nicotine withdrawal and smoking cessation. All of the above methods should be used under medical supervision.

Valuable assistance can be obtained from doctors, pharmacists, nurses and trained smoking addiction counselors. Friends and family are invaluable for daily support. Currently there is a large amount of information and support on internet sites, hot lines and in written literature available by contacting the Hunterdon Prevention Resources at 908-782-3909. All help is confidential. The following web sites are also excellent: www.whatyouneedtoknowhunterdon.com and www.cancer.gov under tobacco cessation.

In our society today, you will find much more support to stop smoking than in the past. Plan through gathering all the information you need to understand the process, explore the reasons you smoke, develop a strong mental and emotional motivation and enlist the assistance of everyone you need. It is possible.