

Joel's Reinforcement Library

NEVER TAKE ANOTHER PUFF!

A Safer Way to Smoke

Smokers are always looking for ways to reduce the health risks of smoking. Unfortunately, most techniques used to reduce the risk don't work, and, in many cases, may actually increase the dangers of smoking.

Probably the most popular method of risk reduction is switching to low tar and nicotine cigarettes. If people only smoked to perpetuate a simple habit, low tar and nicotine cigarettes would probably reduce the dangers of smoking. Unfortunately, the necessity to smoke is not continuance of a habit but rather maintenance of an addiction. Switching to a low tar and nicotine cigarette makes it difficult for a smoker to reach and maintain his normal required level of nicotine. The smoker will probably develop some sort of compensatory smoking pattern. Compensatory behaviors include smoking more cigarettes, smoking them further down, inhaling deeper, or holding the smoke down longer.

By doing one or a combination of these behaviors, the smoker will reach similar levels of tar and nicotine in his system as when he smoked his old brand, but, in the process, he may increase the amount of other potent poisons beyond what was delivered by his old cigarettes. Low tar and nicotine cigarettes often have higher concentrations of other dangerous poisons. By increasing consumption, substantially greater amounts of these poisons are taken into the system, thereby increasing his risk of diseases associated with these chemicals. One such poison, found in higher quantities in many low tar and nicotine cigarettes, is carbon monoxide. Carbon monoxide is one of the major factors contributing to the high incidence of heart and circulatory diseases in smokers. Also, to give flavor to the low tar and nicotine cigarettes, many additional additives and flavor enhancers are used. Tobacco companies are not required to disclose what the chemical additives are, but the medical community suspects that many of these additives are carcinogenic (cancer producing) and may actually be increasing the smoker's risk of tobacco-related cancers.

The filter at the end of cigarettes also may make a difference in how much poison a smoker takes in. Some filters are more effective than others, but, again, a smoker will generally alter the way he smokes rendering many of the protective actions of the filters useless. Some cigarettes have holes inserted around the perimeter of the filter

permitting more air to be inhaled with the tars and gases of the cigarette. Theoretically, this lowers the amount of the actual tobacco smoke being inhaled. But, a smoker will normally find these cigarettes difficult to inhale and cannot get the amount of nicotine necessary to satisfy the craving. In response, he may smoke more or may discover an even more innovative way to interfere with the filter's protective action. Many times a smoker will learn how to put the cigarettes a little deeper into his mouth and seal his lips around the ventilation holes, thus decreasing the filter's efficiency. I have even encountered smokers in clinics who put tape around these holes because they found the cigarette easier to inhale and generally tasted better. In the process, they inactivated the semi-protective mechanism of the filter. Their attempts at making their smoking safer were simply an inconvenience and a waste of time. Filters could be developed that would take out all of the nicotine, but, unfortunately, in order to satisfy the addiction, most smokers would give themselves a hernia trying to inhale.

One last method of risk reduction worth mentioning is vitamin supplements. The body's ability to utilize Vitamin C is impaired by smoking. When some smokers learn this, they start taking supplemental Vitamin C. But vitamin C acidifies the urine, resulting in the body accelerating the excretion rate of nicotine. In response, the smoker may smoke extra cigarettes. In the process, he will probably destroy the extra vitamin C and increase his exposure to all of the poisonous chemicals found in tobacco smoke.

Almost every method of making smoking safer is a farce. There is only one way to totally reduce the deadly effects of smoking, and that is, simply, not to smoke. Only then will your chances of diseases such as heart disease, cancer and emphysema be reduced to the level of nonsmokers. And to keep your risk at these low levels, only one method is necessary— **NEVER TAKE ANOTHER PUFF!**

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