

HAPPY HOLIDAYS

Tackle Your Triggers

The holidays can be a stressful time that cause people to become more anxious and stressed. Certain activities, people, feelings or situations can make you want to use tobacco products. These are called triggers. Triggers look different for everyone, whether you're still using tobacco or in the middle of your quit journey. Maybe your habit is to reward yourself with a smoke after a shift or hit the bar to vape with your buddies. Whatever your triggers may be, there are ways to tackle them by being prepared.

WHAT ARE TOBACCO TRIGGERS?

There are four kinds of triggers that may make you want to use tobacco: emotional, pattern, social and withdrawal. Identifying your triggers before you quit and throughout your journey can help you create a stronger quit plan to live tobacco free. We will focus on the first three triggers.

EMOTIONAL TRIGGERS

Emotional triggers occur when you have one or more strong feelings and reach for a tobacco product to get through the moment. They can include: stress or anxiety, excitement, boredom or loneliness.

How to tackle emotional triggers

Reach out to your buddies and support group. Talk to a loved one or friend about how you feel. Remember, your buddies or fellow Service members may be going through a similar situation. Take deep breaths to de-stress and try positive self-talk. Remind yourself that you're better than tobacco and think about your reasons for quitting (like improving your PT test).

PATTERN TRIGGERS

Pattern triggers are activities you associate with tobacco use. They can include: drinking alcohol, being deployed, eating a meal, drinking coffee, after having sex, before going to sleep, and when waking up.

How to tackle pattern triggers

Change your routine. Listen to your favorite song during your break instead of hanging out at the designated tobacco use area (DTUA) or crush a workout when you wake up instead of reaching for a tobacco product. Replace your response. Text a buddy, eat a low-calorie snack or put a toothpick in your mouth to get through a craving.

SOCIAL TRIGGERS

Social triggers are occasions where others use tobacco products. They can include: hanging out at a bar, celebrating at a promotion party, or going to the DTUA where others are using tobacco.

How to tackle social triggers

Try to limit putting yourself in tough situations when you can. Ditch the hookah bar and steer clear of DTUAs and other places that remind you of tobacco products. Suggest non-tobacco activities. Play sports or explore a new town so that you can stay in control of your surroundings of nicotine.

Boost Healthy Habits During the Holidays

HEALTHY HABITS FOR YOUR BODY

Keep your body moving. Gaining 5-10 pounds during the holidays is not unusual especially if you are cutting down or quitting your habit, because you may replace tobacco with food. Get ahead of weight gain by staying active with workouts you enjoy (bonus: it'll help you stay within military standards).

Grab a healthy snack. *Tobacco cravings normally pass in 5-10 minutes.* Make that time go by faster and curb the cravings by grabbing a healthy snack. Replace chips with veggies or fruit or have some almonds on hand. For a low-cal option, try sugar-free hard candy.

Snooze your way to better sleep.

Remember, nicotine is a stimulant and can disrupt your sleep. Practice meditating or reading before bed to get the proper rest your body needs to stay mission ready.

HEALTHY HABITS FOR YOUR MIND

Break up your day to de-stress. Schedule small breaks throughout the day to unwind and give your mind a rest. Switch things up with a change of scenery, a short walk for some fresh air or play a quick game on your phone to relieve stress.

Remember the power of a support system! If using tobacco was a way for you to spend time with friends or loved ones, suggest non-tobacco related activities instead that keep your hands and mind busy (like playing cards or working out together). Interacting with others can help distract you from cravings, but have a plan in mind to steer clear of tobacco triggers.

Channel your energy into a new activity. Quitting tobacco comes with both good and tough moments, but trying a new hobby can help you focus elsewhere. Whether it's learning woodworking or trying a new sport, a new activity can keep your mind engaged to help you fight tobacco urges.

You Can Quit 2 (n.d.). Tackle your triggers. <https://www.ycq2.org/how-to-quit-tobacco/preparing-to-quit/tackle-your-triggers/>

You Can Quit 2 (n.d.). Boost Healthy Habits While You Quit. <https://www.ycq2.org/how-to-quit-tobacco/preparing-to-quit/boost-healthy-habits-while-you-quit/>



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See calendar on other side to
see what is going on this week

A Personal Message From Your Health Promotion Health Myth Busting Team



Dear Health Myth Busters,

More and more of my friends in the unit are vaping and I am concerned. I heard the other day that quitting vaping can be different than kicking the tobacco habit, is this true? How can I support my friends who want to quit?

Sincerely,
Concerned Airman

Dear Concerned Airman,

Your observation is accurate, the number of people who want to quit vape products like JUUL or e-cigarettes is increasing. The latest released vaping statistics are startling. 1 in 20 Americans vape, according to vaping statistics from the New England Journal of Medicine, and youth e-cigarette use has increased by 1,800%. Offering a nonjudgmental discussion is the way to go. Let your friends know that they are not alone when trying to quit vaping. Quitting vaping is similar but not 100% the same, as quitting traditional tobacco products (think: cigarettes and dip). You can give your friends the following information on how to quit vaping.

6 Steps to Quit Vaping

- 1. Remember why you want to quit.** Maybe you want to quit to break the tie to nicotine or protect your health. Keep that reason in your back pocket at all times. Literally. Make your reason the background on your phone or keep a note in your pocket - personal motivation is powerful when quitting.
- 2. Identify triggers.** When you try to quit, certain places (like the bar) or your buddies vaping around you, may make you want to join in. Make a plan to avoid triggers as much as possible and find replacement activities for the times you used to vape.
- 3. Fight cravings like a pro.** Some vape products have more nicotine than traditional cigarettes. Know exactly how to fight nicotine cravings so that when you feel one coming on, you hit the gym, grab some lemon water or call a friend to redirect your attention. Talk to your health care provider about other options such as nicotine replacement therapy.
- 4. Talk to your support system.** The people who care about you want to see you succeed. Share how you are feeling - the good, the bad, the ugly and everything in between. Share these tips on how your friends or family can support you during your quit.
- 5. Quit together.** Quitting may not seem like the "cool thing" to do, but as the dangers of vaping become clearer, it's possible your buddy wants to quit too. Show your strength by asking them to quit with you and let them know it's easier to quit together.
- 6. Celebrate your accomplishments.** Every milestone is important during your quit journey - starting with conquering those first 24 hours vape free. Celebrate these moments because it will help you fight the craving.

Sincerely,
Health Myth Busters

CDC (n.d). Quick facts on the risks of e-cigarettes for kids, teens, and young adults. https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/basic_information/e-cigarettes/Quick-Facts-on-the-Risks-of-E-cigarettes-for-Kids-Teens-and-Young-Adults.html

Got questions on other health issues related to sleep health, physical activity, tobacco, or nutrition? Share them with us and we will help you "Bust The Myths!" Send your questions to usaf.jbsa.afmsa.mbx.afmra-hpo@health.mil. Make sure to include in the subject line "Health Myth Buster." For more online health tips visit the Air Force Health Promotion webpage <https://www.airforcemedicine.af.mil/Resources/Health-Promotion/>



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Community Events

HERE'S WHAT'S GOING
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Your Local Health
Promotion Office



Contact:

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Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday