

## Smoke-Free for Life: Tips to Quit

by Albert W. Morris, Jr., M.D.

(NAPS)—Your determination to give up tobacco doesn't have to go up in smoke, if you heed a few hints:

- Commit to quit. Set a quit date and stick to it.

- Clean house. Throw away all cigarettes and other smoking-related items such as ashtrays, lighters and matches. After you throw away your cigarettes, soak them with water so you can't get them out of the trash.

- Take it slow. Use over-the-counter nicotine-replacement therapy (gum, lozenges or the patch) that lets your body gradually reduce nicotine cravings to help in this process. Determine which one is best for your level of smoking and follow the directions for optimum results.

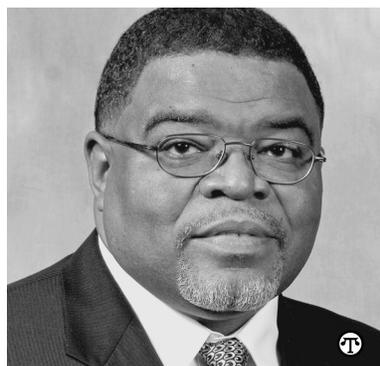
- Off to dreamland. When withdrawing from nicotine, a good night's sleep (a full 8 hours) becomes even more important.

- Change your routine. Eliminate as many of the people, places and activities that triggered stress or made you crave a cigarette such as coffee or alcohol.

- Sweat it out. A walk around the block or another form of exercise will ease your craving and help ease tension.

- Just your imagination. Create distractions or substitutes for your nicotine craving. Chew gum, suck on lollipops or hard candy or use toothpicks.

- Share the love. Tell your family and friends you're quitting and ask for their support. Focus on healthful habits and the free-



Dr. Morris

dom you are creating by kicking the habit.

- Patience is a virtue. If at first you don't succeed, try again. Don't beat yourself up if you are not successful the first time quitting. Research shows only 9 percent of smokers stop for seven months or longer, and most ex-smokers require multiple quit attempts. Never give up ... it's worth it to quit.

- Reach out for help. Call the National Cancer Institute Smoking quitline at (877) 44U-QUIT and visit [www.smokefree.gov](http://www.smokefree.gov). Or call (800) Quit-Now.

- Remember, smoking is one of the biggest risk factors for a heart attack as well as for stroke, lung cancer and emphysema.

- *Dr. Morris is president of the National Medical Association, the collective voice of physicians of African descent and a leading force for parity in medicine and promotion of optimal health. To learn more about the association, visit <http://stopsmoking.nmanet.org>.*

### Did You Know?

Research shows most ex-smokers require multiple quit attempts, but don't give up, it's worth it to quit, says Albert W. Morris, Jr., M.D. president of the National Medical Association. To learn more, visit <http://stopsmoking.nmanet.org>.

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9

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