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## Quitting Tobacco: How to Beat the Cravings

### Nicotine and Your Brain

- As a smoker, you are used to having a certain level of nicotine in your body.
- Smoking gives the “pleasure center” (amyglia) in your brain repeated “hits” of nicotine.
- In response, your brain grows dependent on nicotine to feel better (relaxed or in control or content)
- The cycle of nicotine hits and brain dependence leads to more packs smoked and more money spent (What a marketing tool!!)
- “Triggers” are sights, sounds, smells, tastes and places that the brain remembers as “nicotine time.”
- Cravings happen when nicotine in the brain is reduced or eliminated.

### What To Expect

- Cravings may last 2-3 minutes, but will occur repeatedly during while staying quit.
- The length and strength of cravings varies between individuals but the following tools may relieve, or even beat nicotine cravings!

### What To Do

- Remind yourself cravings will pass.
- Talk to your doctor about the different nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) that can relieve cravings during the first 4 months of staying quit.
- Take deep breaths to get through a craving.
- Eat fresh vegetables, chew gum or sugar free candy instead of snacking.
- Exercise to lower the chance of gaining weight due to replacing smoking with snacking.
- Get support from family and friends.
- Be good to yourself if you slip.

### How To Get Help

- If you or someone you know wants help with giving up tobacco, go to [www.TryToStopNH.org](http://www.TryToStopNH.org) and click on the NH Smokers’ Helpline, you will be able to request a call from a Tobacco Treatment Specialist and free Cessation Counseling;
- or call **1-800-Try-To-STOP** (1-800-879-8678). This is a free and confidential service for all NH residents.