

Nicotine dependence.

The nicotine in tobacco is a highly addictive drug and contains more than 4000 chemicals.¹ Some people become more addicted to it than others, for a variety of reasons. Knowing how dependent you are on nicotine can help you to make some decisions about the best way to quit for you.

Low or high level of nicotine dependence?

The six questions below will show you how dependent you are on the nicotine in tobacco.²

Question	Answer	Score (circle one)
1. How soon after waking do you smoke your first cigarette?	Within 5 minutes 6-30 minutes 31-60 minutes	3 2 1
2. Do you find it difficult to abstain from smoking in places where it is forbidden?	Yes No	1 0
3. Which cigarette would you hate to give up?	The first one in the morning Any other	1 0
4. How many cigarettes a day do you smoke?	10 or less 11 - 20 21 - 30 31 or more	0 1 2 3
5. Do you smoke more frequently in the morning than in the rest of the day?	Yes No	1 0
6. Do you smoke even though you are sick in bed for most of the day?	Yes No	1 0
	Total	

Score:	1-2	= very low dependence
	3-4	= low dependence
	5	= medium dependence
	6-7	= high dependence
	8+	= very high dependence

What your score means:

The higher your score on the test, the more likely you are to benefit from using nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) or Zyban to assist with withdrawal symptoms and to quit. Those with a score above five should consider using a higher dose of NRT. Those with a score of four or less may still benefit from a lower dose of NRT.

If you have had a health problem, such as a heart attack or stroke see your doctor before you quit. If you're pregnant or planning to start a family it is very important to discuss your quit plan with your doctor.

So what's the good news?

Within 20 minutes of quitting, your body begins a series of changes that continue for years.³

For example, four hours after quitting smoking, the nicotine level in your blood is reduced by half. Within hours carbon monoxide in the blood decreases and the oxygen level in blood increases. Within days the ability to smell and taste has improved and physical activity becomes easier. Within three months, coughing, sinus congestion and shortness of breath decrease.

Call the Quitline 13 QUIT (137 848)

The Quitline 13 QUIT (13 7848) is a confidential telephone based service primarily designed to help smokers quit smoking. The Quitline can also provide assistance to the family and friends of smokers and others requesting information about smoking. If you are not fluent in English an interpreter service is available.

By calling the Quitline (for the cost of a local call) you can:

- Be sent a free Quit Pack
- Get help to plan your quit attempt
- Take advantage of talking to specially trained Quitline advisers
- Take part in the free call-back and follow-up service

References

1. US Department Health and Human Services. 1989. *Reducing the Health Consequences of Smoking – 25 Years of Progress. A report of the US Surgeon General*. Office on Smoking and Health, Rockville, Maryland: US Department of Health and Human Services, Public Health Service, Centers for Disease Control, Center for Chronic Disease and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health.
2. Heatherton TF, Kozlowski LT, Frecher RC & Fagerstrom KO (1991) The Fagerstrom Test for Nicotine Dependence: a revision of the Fagerstrom Tolerance Questionnaire, *British Journal of Addiction*, 86 pp 1119-1127.
3. US Department of Health and Human Services 2004, *The Health Consequences of Smoking: A Report of the Surgeon General*. US Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health, 2004.