### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT WITHDRAWALS AND NICOTINE QUITTING AIDS

**WHAT SHOULD YOU KNOW ABOUT QUITTING?**

* 70% of smokers try to quit.
* The first week is critical – 60% of all smokers who try to quit relapse in the first week.
* Do not give up. Smokers typically take 5 – 7 attempts to quit.
* 50% of all people who smoke eventually quit for good.
* Weight gain only occurs in about 1/3 of all cases and then it is only a few pounds.
* There are many ways to quit – cold turkey, nicotine patch or gum, Zyban, and guided quit programs. Choose the one you think is best for you.
* Withdrawal symptoms are normal. These may include nervousness, irritability, hunger, trouble sleeping, difficulty concentrating, or headaches. Such physical symptoms are like a mild case of the flu and usually are gone within a few days.

**WHY DO WITHDRAWALS OCCUR?**

### After years of smoking, your body has come to depend on nicotine. Once you stop the nicotine level drops until it is out of your body. Nicotine causes receptors in your brain to make you want more. One-way people stop the craving is to get more nicotine – either through cigarettes or through other means, like the gum or the patch. Remember that as bad as these cravings may feel, they will pass – ask others who have stopped smoking.

***Is there a best method for stopping smoking?***

No! It depends on you. Some people stop on their own, others use a form of nicotine replacement such as the patch, while others talk to a counselor.

***Is giving up alcohol or tobacco easier?***

It depends on you. Some people stop smoking first, some change their drinking first, while others quit both substances together.

***How will having smokers in my household affect my decision to stop smoking?***

It could affect you, particularly if your spouse smokes. One way to minimize your risk is to have smokers in your household also consider quitting or ask them to not smoke in the house or in your presence.

***How will I know what is best for me?***

Try the method that seems easiest and most reasonable first. If that does not work, try another method. If you have tried several times previously to stop, you might want to consider a nicotine replacement therapy. ⇨⇨⇨

Which cessation method is best? How should I go about quitting?

The following provides some brief information about various cessation methods. You can also ask your counselor for more information.

**Nicotine Replacement Therapy**: The two most common nicotine replacement therapies include the nicotine patch and the nicotine gum. They are available over the counter and in different doses to meet your needs. While these products may appear costly, compare it to what it costs to buy cigarettes once a week.

The nicotine patch and the gum are both very safe and approximately double a smoker’s chance of quitting smoking. The goal is to relieve withdrawals from the nicotine in cigarettes while helping people gradually reduce their nicotine intake.

**Nicotine Gum (Nicorette)**

The gum comes in either 2 or 4 mg doses. The nicotine is released from the resin by chewing. Here are four tips for using the gum:

✓ **Plan in advance**. Nicotine absorption from the gum peaks in 30 minutes from chewing.

✓ **Use the right dose for you**. Highly dependent smokers might need the 4mg gum

✓ **Learn to park your gum** in your cheek and do not chew it too quickly.

✓ **Do not** drink coffee, alcohol, juice, or soda when chewing the gum.

**Nicotine Patch (Habitrol, Nicoderm, Nicotrol)**

Nicotine patches, unlike nicotine gum, allow for a steady continuous rate of nicotine in the system. They are applied to the skin daily in the morning upon waking and are typically used for 8-14 weeks, with a 4-6 weeks tapering dose.

Four different transdermal nicotine patches are available over-the-counter. Three patches are for 24 hours (21-22 mg) and one is for 16 hours (15 mg). Make sure to follow the instructions when using the patch (see package insert):

✓ Do not smoke while on the patch.

✓ Select new hairless locations each day between your neck and waist.

✓ Apply 24 hours patches upon waking.

### Zyban and the Nicotine Inhaler

Two new medications were approved by the FDA as aides to quitting smoking: the nicotine inhaler (which is another form of nicotine replacement) and Zyban (an antidepressant medication that is also called Wellbutrin). You need a prescription from your physician for either of these two medications.

### How long do I use the gum or the patch?

Some experts say 3 months while others are now recommending longer periods. Some people have used the gum for up to two years.