Quitting tobacco use brings about a variety of physical and psychological withdrawal symptoms. For some people, coping with withdrawal symptoms is like riding a roller coaster—there can be sharp turns, slow climbs, and unexpected plunges. **Most symptoms begin within the first 1 to 2 days, peak within the first week, and subside within 2 to 4 weeks.** Report new symptoms to your health-care provider, especially if severe. Consider the impact of recent medication changes and your caffeine intake.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symptom</th>
<th>Cause</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Relief</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Chest tightness          | Your lungs are undergoing changes, and your body is tense because it is craving nicotine. It also might be caused by sore muscles from coughing. | Can last several weeks                        | • Use relaxation techniques  
• Try deep breathing  
• Use of a nicotine medication might help |
| Constipation, stomach pain, gas | Intestinal movement decreases.                                      | Can last several weeks                        | • Drink plenty of fluids  
• Add fruits, vegetables, and whole-grain cereals to diet       |
| Cough, sore throat       | The body is getting rid of accumulated mucus in the airways.         | Variable                                      | • Drink plenty of fluids  
• Attempt to avoid additional stress during first few weeks |
| Craving for a cigarette  | Nicotine is a strongly addictive drug, and withdrawal causes cravings. | Frequent for first 2–3 days; can happen for months or years | • Wait out the urge, which lasts only a few minutes  
• Exercise (take walks)  
• Use of a nicotine medication might help |
| Depressed mood           | It is common to feel sad for a period of time after you first quit smoking. Many people have a strong urge to smoke when they feel depressed. | Can last weeks, but typically subsides after a month | • Increase pleasurable activities  
• Talk with your clinician about changes in your mood when quitting  
• Get extra support from friends and family |
| Difficulty concentrating | The body needs time to adjust to not having constant stimulation from nicotine. | Can last several weeks                        | • Plan workload accordingly  
• Attempt to avoid additional stress during first few weeks |
| Dizziness                | The body is getting extra oxygen.                                     | Typically subsides within a couple of weeks    | • Use extra caution  
• Change positions slowly |
| Hunger                   | Cravings for a cigarette can be confused with hunger pangs; sensation can result from oral cravings or the desire for something in the mouth. | Variable; weeks to months                     | • Drink water or low-calorie liquids  
• Be prepared with low-calorie snacks |
| Insomnia                 | Nicotine affects brain wave function and influences sleep patterns; coughing and dreams about smoking are common. | Variable; weeks to months                     | • Reduce caffeine intake by about half (and none after lunchtime, to improve sleep), because its effects will increase with quitting smoking  
• Use relaxation techniques |
| Irritability             | The body’s craving for nicotine can produce irritability.             | Can last several weeks but typically subsides with 4 weeks | • Take walks  
• Try hot baths  
• Use relaxation techniques |

Adapted from materials from the National Cancer Institute.