

Q and A about N-O-T (For Teens)!

So, what is this N-O-T program I've been hearing about?

N-O-T is the teen stop-smoking program from the American Lung Association. It's brand new! N-O-T was developed just for teens, not adapted from a program for adults. It was developed at West Virginia University's Prevention Research Center by researchers who are also educators, people who know, like and work with teens. N-O-T really can help teens succeed at something that's really hard to do—stop smoking.

Why is it so hard to quit smoking?

There are lots of reasons. If you smoke, chances are your friends smoke, some family members smoke, and you've probably been smoking for a while. You may think you can quit smoking whenever you choose, but then you try to quit and you can't. You probably can't quit because by now you're addicted to nicotine and your body craves that drug. The craving is probably stronger when you are with friends. Yes, quitting is one of the hardest things some people ever do, but the earlier you quit, the easier it may be.

So, can this N-O-T program help?

Yes, N-O-T can help teens to quit smoking (or at least cut back on smoking) because it has all the information you need and has a really good plan to help you. It's the first program that has separate male and female groups so that teens can relax and talk about issues that are most important to them. The groups are led by specially picked facilitators from the schools—maybe coaches or teachers or counselors—people who like teenagers and can treat them like adults. And the N-O-T group is filled with other teens who want to quit smoking too, so you're all working towards the same thing and you're not trying to do it alone.

Where is the N-O-T program being offered this year?

Since its introduction in 1998, the N-O-T program has grown every year. In 2001, the program was offered in schools and community groups in over 40 states, and had helped thousands of teen smokers quit.

So, if I did join the N-O-T group at my school, what would I get out of it?

Well, first, you'd have a good chance at really quitting smoking. Goodbye to smelly clothes, yellow teeth, and all that money down the drain! You'd be a part of a team—a team working together to do what you know you want to do: quit smoking for good. You'd have a great adult coaching you, cheering you on as you go step by step through the program. You'd meet every week, during school time, to learn about the best tips and strategies to help you succeed. You'd do some interesting things together that'll help everyone to smoke less, deal with their friends and parents who still smoke, and keep healthy. If you want to quit, this could be your best chance ever!

What if I couldn't really quit?

Lots of people—teens and adults—can't quit the first time they try. For some people it takes several tries. And maybe you won't be able to quit completely. But you'll still be a winner. In the N-O-T program, you'll be learning all the things you need to know when you're really ready to quit for good. In the meantime, you'll probably cut back a lot on how many cigarettes you smoke. That's a victory in itself! And the less you smoke, the easier it will be to finally quit. You'll also learn a lot about yourself—about good decision-making, about dealing with people, about living a healthier life, and about not allowing cigarettes to dictate where you go and what you do. You might even do better in school and find you're interested in some new things. So, the N-O-T program will help you to succeed in lots of ways.

I don't smoke, but my friend does. Can N-O-T help my friend?

Sure, but first your friend needs to want to quit or no program will really help. You can help your friend, though. Encourage your friend to think about quitting. If she/he decides that the time has come, then encourage your friend to sign up for N-O-T and then you can be a real help. Listen to your friend, be understanding about how hard it is to quit, and try to overlook a bit of temporary irritability. Be your friend's best cheerleader...encourage, support and celebrate your friend's hard work towards quitting.

One last thing, what does N-O-T stand for again?

N-O-T stands for Not On Tobacco, the American Lung Association's teen cessation program. Contact your local American Lung Association at 1-800-LUNG-USA.