

FOREVER
FREE...for Baby and Me

A Guide To Remaining Smoke Free



Booklet 2: Partner Support

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Booklet 2 is for the partner or support person of a pregnant woman or new mom. It talks about why partner support is important for the woman who is trying to quit smoking and stay quit. It also discusses ways to help and support each other during this transition of being smoke-free. We ask that you, as the partner, also read the other Forever Free for Baby and Me booklets. But this booklet was developed just for you. It is meant to help you learn how to help your partner.

Why Am I Getting This Booklet?

Having a healthy baby is not just the responsibility of the mother. As the partner of a pregnant woman or new mother, you are a very important part of the pregnancy and the health of the baby. Being a partner or support person may mean that you are the spouse or boyfriend. Being a partner also may mean that you are a friend or family member who is very close to the pregnant woman or new mother. By giving you this booklet, she is telling you that she knows that you care about her, and she is asking for your help and support.

*A **partner** can be a husband, boyfriend, family member, friend, or any other close person who supports the pregnant woman or new mom. It is someone who cares about her.*

Everyone knows that a woman has a great deal of stress during pregnancy and after delivery, especially if she is quitting smoking! As the partner of a pregnant woman or new mother, you have many stresses and challenges facing you, too. Here are a few examples:

- ◆ Less time to yourself
- ◆ Money concerns (doctor appointments, maternity and baby clothes, etc.)
- ◆ Less time for being close with your partner
- ◆ Coping with your pregnant woman or new mom's changing moods
- ◆ Increased sense of responsibility
- ◆ Less sleep

As you can see, pregnancy and quitting smoking can be a stressful time for both the mother and her partner. During this time, your pregnant partner will need your help and support. But, remember that you may need support as well.



Why A Booklet For Partners?

Research shows that a person is more likely to quit smoking for good when they have the encouragement of many people. As the partner, you may provide one of the messages a pregnant woman or new mom may need to make the decision to quit and to stay smoke-free.

Your support and positive words can strongly influence her attempts to remain smoke-free. Discussing ways you can help and support her will greatly improve her chances of being a non-smoker.

Why is it important that she quit smoking and stay smoke-free during her pregnancy? Now is a good time to talk with her and discuss her reasons. We provide a few examples for you here: to improve her health, to protect the health of the fetus (the unborn baby), to provide a healthy environment for the infant, to save money, and to smell better. To learn more about the effects of smoking around children and loved ones, you might want to read *Booklet 4: Smoking & Health*.

Much of this booklet is about how you can help your pregnant partner. But we understand that you have your own stresses and concerns during the pregnancy and after the baby is born.

What are your own concerns about the pregnancy, the baby, and smoking?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____



After reading the rest of this booklet, you may want to discuss these concerns with your partner.

You probably know that quitting smoking is good for your pregnant partner and her baby. *But her quitting smoking is also good for you!* There are many benefits to you, as the partner, for supporting her efforts to stay off cigarettes.

Here are some of these benefits:

- ◆ A healthier living space for everyone: you, your pregnant partner, the baby, and the family.
- ◆ Fewer illnesses, doctor appointments, medical bills, and missed work days.
- ◆ Lower insurance bills.
- ◆ More money.
- ◆ Less stress in the household. (Quitting smoking *lowers* stress after the ex-smoker adjusts.) When she feels less stress, you too will feel less stress.
- ◆ A grateful partner!



What Can I, As The Partner, Do To Help?

1. **Ask how you can help.** Everyone has different needs. Your partner can tell you what works best for her. She may just need you to listen to her. Try to be available to her as much as you can, especially at the beginning.
2. **Be patient, supportive, and listen.** Do not preach or counsel. Be ready for mood changes and irritability due to physical discomfort. These can be a normal part of both smoking withdrawal and pregnancy. Do your best to be patient with her if she is crabby. Many women are tempted to smoke because they feel it is not fair for their partner to have to deal with their irritability. Encourage her to discuss how she is feeling, and let her know that you are willing to be supportive during her mood swings. They are temporary, but her better health from remaining smoke-free is permanent! You can also support her by telling her the positive changes you see in her.

Steve's wife, Bianca, quit smoking 2 months ago. Steve tried to be very supportive and would make comments about how much better her clothes smelled or that her skin looked healthier. These things encouraged her to remain smoke-free. She liked hearing Steve's positive comments because they showed that he saw the effort she was making to stay off cigarettes. It also encouraged her to stay a nonsmoker.

3. **Put her first.** Help her to avoid smoke and other smokers. Speak up if other people are smoking around her. If you smoke, avoid smoking around her. Also try to avoid smelling of smoke. You can do this by rinsing your mouth with mouthwash, washing your hands, or changing your clothes. Many women report that it is hard to stay quit if their partner smokes. Create "no smoking" rules in your house and car. Try to take part in healthy activities that do not involve smoking, such as walking. And try to go to places where smoking is not allowed, such as to the movies or the mall.



4. **Help her to keep her stress down.** Pregnancy is a stressful time for any woman, but quitting smoking can add to her stress. This can then add to your stress. Find positive ways to deal with your stress and to help her deal with her stress. Exercise is one good way to relieve stress. Women report exercising more if their partners exercise, too. Remember to always check with a doctor about the types of exercise you both can do. Other ways to decrease stress are deep breathing, talking about your concerns, eating well, and getting enough rest.

Peter's girlfriend, Monica, had gone without smoking for a couple of months during her pregnancy. Then she had a really bad day at work. She felt stressed and craved a cigarette. She told Peter how she was feeling. He responded with hurtful comments. He put her down for being weak and preached to her about all the harm she would do to the baby. These comments only increased Monica's urge for a cigarette. She would have preferred her boyfriend to suggest doing something else instead of smoking, like going for a walk and talking about her stressful day.

What else could Peter have done differently? More importantly, what are some ways that you can help your pregnant partner deal with stress? Each person is different. Ask her what will work best for her. See if you can list a few ways that you can help her stay quit:

5. **Provide practical support.** Help with housework or other chores. Decreasing some of the stress in her life will help her remain smoke-free. Make a survival kit with items to help her with withdrawal symptoms. This includes carrot sticks, gum, hard candy, toothpicks, and games. Ask what she needs, and try to help her in that way. Plan ahead.



- 6. Avoid teasing.** Many times people are tempted to tease to lighten a mood. You might joke that you liked your pregnant partner more when she smoked because she wasn't so cranky. Or maybe you might tease her after the baby is born that she is no longer eating for two. This type of teasing, although you may mean it in a funny way, may hurt her feelings. These types of comments might lead your partner to feel she should return to smoking to please you.
- 7. Don't expect overnight success.** Many individuals who try to quit smoking do not succeed on the first try. If your partner should slip and smoke a cigarette, encourage her to quit again as soon as possible. Remind her of her reasons for quitting (her health, her baby's health, your health, etc.) Talk with her about what triggered her to smoke again. Discuss with her ways to deal with the problem in the future. Do not nag or get angry with her. Instead, offer support through kind words.



- 8. Celebrate her successes.** Celebrate small goals that your partner achieves, such as staying smoke-free for four days, a week, a month, six months, after delivery, etc. Make dinner for her, take her to a movie, take a walk in the park together, send her flowers or balloons, make her a card, or give her a gift certificate for a massage or manicure. Let her know you are proud of what she is trying to do, no matter how big or small.

List a reward that you could give her for each of the following:*

- ◆ Staying smoke-free *for one more week.* _____
- ◆ ... *for one more month.* _____
- ◆ ... *for one month after delivery.* _____
- ◆ ... *for 3 months after delivery.* _____
- ◆ ... *for one year after delivery.* _____

* Hint: It might be a good idea to ask *her* what would be good rewards.

9. **Keep it up. Don't give up. Carry on. Stick with it.** OK, you get the idea. It is easy to be supportive in the very beginning. But she may need your support even more after the baby is born. If you want to help her to stay smoke-free, you'll need to keep being there for her after the baby is born. This time is very hard for many women, and it brings many urges to want to start smoking again. One new mother told us...

My husband, Todd, was great when I first quit smoking during my pregnancy. He was always trying to help me out. I wish he had quit smoking, too, but at least he never smoked around me. He would take a walk around the block when he had to smoke. He got rid of lighters and ashtrays and never let anyone else smoke in our house. But after Ellen was born, he started slipping back into his old habits. Not all at once, but a little at a time. At first, he would just light his cigarette as he was walking out the door, or leave the pack lying around. But now he's even smoking in the house again. With Ellen crying all night, I'm tired and stressed out, and cigarettes are starting to look good to me again. I really need his help now.



As you can see, your pregnant partner may need you more than ever after the baby arrives. Keep up the good work!

What If I, As The Partner, Smoke?

Plan A: You can quit smoking with her.

As we stated before, many women report that being around other smokers was the thing that most tempted them to start smoking again. In fact, research shows that the most helpful thing that a woman's partner can do is to quit smoking too.

You could look at this as an ideal time to quit smoking yourself. By quitting with your partner you will be able to support each other and provide encouragement when one of you is having difficulty staying quit. By quitting together, you can increase the chances of success for both of you.



When Maurice and Susan found out that Susan was pregnant, they both made the decision to quit smoking. Maurice quit to support Susan. He felt it wasn't right to keep his habit when she had to quit hers for the health of the baby. By quitting together they could understand each other better since they were both making the change at the same time. When one was weak and had a craving, the other could provide strength and encouragement. They both also saw quitting smoking as a way to save money for the baby on the way.

Becoming pregnant may have been the main motivation for your partner to quit smoking. But there are many other benefits to quitting smoking besides the health of the baby. These include improved health for your partner, saving money, and a more attractive personal appearance. These concerns probably apply to you as well. So, again, though you may not have planned to quit smoking at this time, it would be a good idea to consider taking advantage of this opportunity to quit with your partner. Staying healthy over the years to be there for her and the new baby is very important.

**The best way to support your loved one
is to quit smoking yourself!**

By not smoking, you reduce the amount of second-hand smoke in the air. Second-hand smoke affects the new mom's health, as well as the health of the baby, both before and after it is born. It makes no difference to the baby if the smoke it breathes in comes from the mother or someone else. A baby who inhales second-hand smoke is put at risk for many more problems, including: asthma, pneumonia, bronchitis, middle ear infections, stunted growth, and lower IQ. Healthy nonsmokers, such as your children, may even have an increased risk of getting lung cancer as a result of second-hand smoke. Finally, children who see a parent smoking are more likely to smoke themselves when they are older.

Carlos decided to quit smoking shortly after his fiancée became pregnant. He quit for the health of the baby and because he knew smoking was bad for him. He didn't want his child to have a father who smoked. Carlos knew that it would be difficult to tell his child not to smoke if he did. He knew that children who see their parents smoking are more likely to smoke themselves because they see the parents as examples to live by.

Quitting is hard, but it will be easier for both of you if you do it together. Read Booklet 1: *An Overview* that your partner received along with other booklets.

Plan B: If you do not quit, then protect her from smoke.

As stated above, quitting smoking with your pregnant partner is the best way to help her stay smoke-free. But, if you are having trouble stopping smoking, then you can help your mom-to-be by protecting her from smoke. Try to smoke elsewhere. Avoid smoking around her. Don't smoke in the house or the car even if she is not there. The sight of someone smoking or the smell of smoke may aggravate her or tempt her to smoke, too. Get rid of any cues for smoking such as cigarettes, lighters, matches,



ashtrays, etc. Ask others not to smoke around her, either. Most importantly, ask her for the most helpful ways that you can support her efforts to stay off cigarettes.

John supported his wife's decision to quit smoking when she found out she was pregnant. He, however, was not ready to quit smoking. He praised his wife for staying smoke-free. He understood how difficult it was for her to keep from smoking and wanted to make things as easy for her as possible. He would not smoke in front of her, and he would not smoke in the house or car. He didn't want to tempt her with the smell of smoke. He would also use mouthwash and wash his hands to try and reduce the smell of his smoking. His wife very much valued his efforts. All of these behaviors helped her remain smoke-free.

Pregnancy and quitting smoking can be stressful for both the mother and her partner. Friends, family, and coworkers can all be helpful during this time. Do not feel that the two of you have to do it alone. Help from any of these people can make the process of staying smoke-free a little easier.



Tell your friends or loved ones how to help. You cannot expect them to read your mind and know what you need. Tell them what you need and how they can help you. Everyone wants and needs something different. That is why it is important that you discuss what you need.

DO NOT BE AFRAID TO ASK FOR HELP!

Remember, quitting smoking and pregnancy can both be difficult. Having the support and encouragement of another person can be very helpful. Both you and the mother-to-be need to be open with each other about your needs and wants. The more you can talk about it, the stronger your commitment to each other will be.

An Exercise For You Both

Now is a good time to think about ways to help your pregnant partner to quit smoking and to stay smoke-free. In the first section, list all of the ways that you can provide support. In the second section, ask your partner to list her own ideas about how you can show support. When you are both done, compare the lists and talk about them. See if you can agree on the best ways that you can support her. This is a great time to share your ideas with one another.

Things that I, as the partner, can do to show support:

- ◆ _____
- ◆ _____
- ◆ _____
- ◆ _____
- ◆ _____



Things that I (the expectant mother/new mom) would like for my partner to do to support my attempts to stay smoke-free:



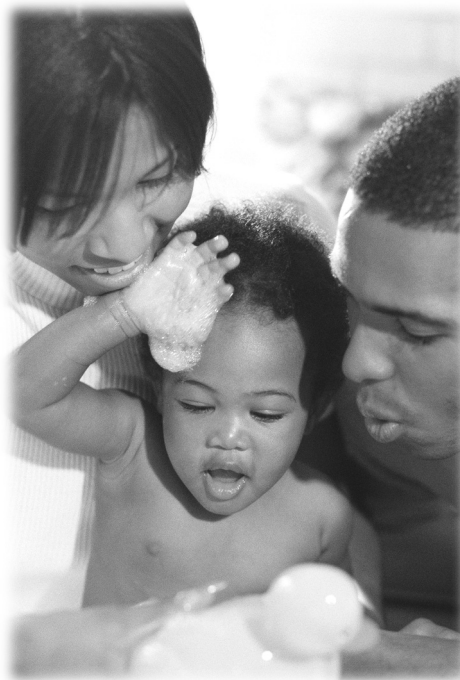
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And last, if you (the partner) are quitting smoking, too...

Ways that I'd like my partner (the mother-to-be) to support my own attempt to quit smoking:

- ◆ _____
- ◆ _____
- ◆ _____
- ◆ _____
- ◆ _____

REMEMBER... Quitting is good for your pregnant partner or new mother, but her quitting is also good for you!



Summary

A partner is any person who has a close relationship with the pregnant woman or new mother and supports her efforts to stay smoke free. We know that women are more likely to quit smoking for good after hearing that they should quit smoking from many different people. As an important person in the pregnant woman or new mother's life, your encouragement is very helpful in her efforts to quit smoking for good. Discuss the reasons that quitting is important to her. Other things that you can do include:

Ask how you can help.
Be patient, supportive, and listen.
Don't expect overnight success.
Help her to keep her stress down.
Provide practical support.
Put her first.
Celebrate her successes.
Keep it up.

We know that the most helpful thing that a woman's partner can do is to quit smoking, too. Your efforts show that you support and understand her. It is also important to know that quitting smoking holds many benefits for *you*. By quitting with your partner, the two of you can work together and provide support to each other.

However, if you decide not to quit at this time, it is important to protect your pregnant woman or new mother from smoke. Ask others to do the same!

Notes:

- ◆ _____
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Enjoy Better Health for You and Your Baby

Stay Smoke-Free!

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