

THE NEWS

Tuesday

August 17, 2010

Ramzan-ul-Mubarak 6, 1431 A.H.

Islamabad/Rawalpindi Edition

Also published from
Karachi, Lahore, London and
globally on World Wide Web at
www.thenews.com.pk

JANG GROUP OF NEWSPAPERS

28 pages
Price Rs. 15.00

Shahina Maqbool
Islamabad

Fasting allows smokers to abstain from smoking during daylight hours to be able to fulfil their religious obligation, making Ramazan the perfect time of the year to quit the addictive habit. Even though the 1st of Ramazan has been designated as the National Quit-Smoking Day, the occasion silently slipped away, with no efforts being made at the national level to step up advocacy and awareness about the efficacy and convenience of quitting smoking at the start of the holy month.

Talking to 'The News' here on Monday, Dr. Rezzan Khan, consultant nutritionist at Shifa International, shared some useful lifestyle-related changes and dietary tips to support smokers with this goal.

Research indicates that smoking urges are usually short, lasting only five minutes. If smokers can resist for those

Expert offers dietary advice to quit smoking during Ramazan

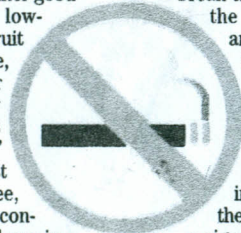
few minutes, they may be able to quit. According to Dr. Rezzan, the most vulnerable time for ex-smokers is after meals, especially after breaking the fast. "It is advisable keeping physically and mentally busy as a strategy to escape smoking urges," she advised. Physical withdrawal symptoms after giving up smoking include irritability, anger, restlessness, impatience, insomnia and difficulty concentrating, peaking for three to 10 days, but with the intensity decreasing over time.

A person's diet and dietary habits can make a difference to their goal of quitting smoking. "Drink lots of fluid and cut back on caffeine. Try to make

water your drink of choice," Dr. Rezzan advised. Water helps to flush the nicotine from the body during the first few days of quitting. If someone is looking for variety, other good choices include low-fat milk, 100% fruit or vegetable juice, and mineral or soda water. "Try to avoid drinks with caffeine," the nutritionist suggested. Coffee, tea and colas all contain caffeine and can increase the "jitters" that are often a side-effect of nicotine withdrawal. A person who cannot live without these beverages

should perhaps try drinking a decaffeinated version or herbal tea.

Those who choose to quit smoking this Ramazan should break the fast away from the smoking crowd and avoid drinks or foods that are normally associated with their smoking habit. "Leave the table immediately after breaking fast, if you have the urge to end it with a cigarette. Take a walk instead of lighting up, go to pray at home or in the mosque or do the dishes. Look for new distractions whenever possible.



In short, do whatever it takes to disassociate from the smoking routines," Dr. Rezzan guided.

Food smells and tastes better when one has stopped smoking. The person may want to eat more as a way to cope with nicotine cravings. Dr. Rezzan believes it is important to resist the urge to over-eat and to instead, have a small meal as 'iftar'. "After an hour or so, have another small dinner. Try to include a variety of whole grains, vegetables, fruits, lower fat milk products, leaner meats and meat alternatives. Instead of greasy, salty snack foods, choose lower calorie foods such as unbuttered popcorn, fruit, vegetables and moderate

amount of nuts," the nutritionist said. Dividing the meal this way makes a tangible difference to the amount one eats. "If you don't divide the meals, and instead decide to consume the food in one sitting, you are more likely to crave nicotine and over-eat later in the night," she said.

According to Dr. Rezzan, one help prevent one's cravings and snack attacks by avoiding or changing the regular routine, substituting healthy foods when one wants to snack or smoke, or using activity to keep busy.

Ramazan fasting is a good chance of keeping one's lungs healthy, which is also essential to improving one's quality of

life. With minor dietary modifications, one can kick off the deadly smoking habit altogether. "Fasting is already leading to detoxification and improvement in organ function, simultaneously. Ending smoking along with fasting can literally change a person's life," Dr. Rezzan stated in conclusion.

Tobacco use kills more than 5 million people each year, including 1.3 million who die of lung cancer, and affects the health of hundreds of thousands of others who are exposed to secondhand smoke. According to research, over 100,000 people in Pakistan die every year due to tobacco-related diseases and almost 50 per cent from cancer-related deaths from tobacco use. These people struggle each year for life and breath due to tobacco-induced lung diseases, including tuberculosis, asthma, pneumonia, influenza, lung cancer and chronic obstructive pulmonary disorder, and many die painfully.