

ARE YOU A "SECRET SMOKER?"

We do not know the exact number, but there are many "secret smokers" in our community. Some were told by their doctors to stop smoking for health reasons but found themselves unable to quit. So, they continue to smoke when no one is looking. Others are men and women who actually quit smoking for months or years, but relapsed back to regular smoking and are ashamed and embarrassed to tell anyone. Some secret smokers hold high positions and feel that others will look down on them if their smoking was ever exposed. Then there are young people, who don't want their parents to know.

If you are a secret smoker, here are some things you should consider.

- No matter how you try to rationalize it, secret smoking is just another form of lying and deceit. Deceiving others is never OK, even if you rationalize it to yourself by saying you are hiding the truth to protect others.
 - < whenever you are dishonest, it is a poor role model for children
 - < being deceitful about anything poisons loving relationships
 - < lying about not smoking leaves loved ones feeling guilty, believing they should have known or done more if you are stricken with a smoking-related disease
- Keeping your smoking a secret not only harms you but it harms those around you because it does not give your family and friends the opportunity to help you quit.
- As a secret smoker, you may think you are fooling your friends and family members, but there are probably tell-tale signs of your secret life. Some of those who love you may already know you are still smoking but simply don't want to confront you on the issue.
- You may think that because secret smoking keeps you from smoking as many cigarettes as you did before, you'll be healthier. That isn't true because you are probably smoking differently to get as much out of each cigarette as you can. Any amount of smoking harms your health. Cutting back is not enough. You must quit smoking entirely to save your life and health.

*He who conceals his illness cannot expect to be cured.
~ Ethiopian Proverb*