

## Douglas Directives

## Cigarette Compulsions

A Suggested Nutritional Protocol to Support Cigarette Compulsion\*

### Nutritional Support for Cigarette/Nicotine Compulsions

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Scientific studies suggest that compulsive tobacco use, nicotine cravings, mood swings, irritability, changes in appetite, weight gain or loss and sleep problems can be symptoms of addiction and are caused by biochemical imbalances that disrupt the normal workings of brain cells. Addictive substances like nicotine short-circuit brain chemistry and can temporarily relieve these symptoms by artificially stimulating "reward" pathways in the brain that involve certain "feel good" stress hormones called neurotransmitters. Nicotine literally substitutes for neurotransmitters that the brain may be unable to produce in adequate amounts. Scientific studies<sup>1</sup> also suggest that the disruptions in brain chemistry causing these symptoms and that in part cause nicotine addiction, are related to nutritional deficiencies that prevent the replenishment of the "feel good" neurotransmitters that could bring brain chemistry back into balance. Chronic deficiencies in neurotransmitters can also be caused by genetic factors which explains why some people seem to "inherit" a tendency to become addicted to drugs like nicotine.

Nicotine short-circuits brain chemistry by disrupting several important neurotransmitters including dopamine, acetylcholine and serotonin to bring about its mind-altering effects. The disappearance of cravings, improved capacity to enjoy pleasure, arousal, increased vigilance, improved performance, relief of anxiety and depression, reduced hunger and control of appetite and body weight are all thought to be caused by nicotine's disruptions in these neurotransmitters. These "improvements" fool the nicotine user into falsely believing that nicotine is doing something beneficial. When I explain to my patients how they have been duped by the drug (not to mention tobacco companies), they are relieved somewhat of the shame and self-doubt stemming from a false belief in a lack of will-power to stop smoking. For those disbelievers, I suggest a brief test - abstain from water or fluids for a day or so, and see if one can control the symptoms of thirsting caused by similar disruptions in brain chemistry!

Further scientific research<sup>2,3</sup> suggests that the symptoms of addiction can be alleviated in part with nutritional support. This makes sense because scientific research has shown that neurotransmitters are naturally made in the brain from certain food components. For instance, dopamine and serotonin synthesis rely on the availability of the amino acids tyrosine and tryptophan (respectively), certain B vitamins (niacin or B<sub>3</sub>, and pyridoxine or B<sub>6</sub>) and the mineral iron. Therefore, it also follows that the symptoms of nicotine addiction, the compulsive tobacco use, nicotine cravings, mood swings, irritability, changes in appetite, weight gain or loss and sleep problems are caused not only by nicotine-induced disruptions in brain chemistry, but that these symptoms may also be caused by an inability to restore brain chemistry to its normal functioning due to dietary deficiencies of the food components needed to synthesize and replenish certain neurotransmitters. Those with genetic tendencies towards addiction may have unique and heightened needs for nutritional supplementation in order to compensate for inherited tendencies to have certain neurotransmitter deficiencies (genetic polymorphisms).

I have successfully treated thousands of addicted patients<sup>4</sup> and I have noticed that nutritional support with targeted food supplements can alleviate many, if not all, of the symptoms of nicotine withdrawal and craving and also that nutritional support can be the determining factor in bringing about the success or failure of a smoking cessation intervention. I don't demand absolute abstinence from my patients. Even if they are not quite ready to quit completely, I think it is perfectly OK to cut down their use and lessen some of the potentially harmful effects to their health caused by smoking tobacco. They are then in a better position to stop completely later. Most of my patients are not capable of smoking anywhere near their pre-treatment levels when they take targeted nutritional supplements designed to replenish the neurotransmitter deficiencies that probably caused them to be addicted in the first place.

I welcome questions from clinicians who are seeking information about nutritional protocols in the treatment of nicotine addiction and cigarette compulsions or from those interested in participating in clinical trials. Different protocols may be more suited to meet the economic and clinical needs of your patients. Please contact me at 888-847-4233, at 202-277-4560, at PowerRecovery1@aol.com or at [www.PowerRecovery.com](http://www.PowerRecovery.com) for more information.

#### References

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