

The Lie Detector

I'M SURE that most people have seen the advertisement on TV where a woman bashes a giant cigarette with a plucked turkey. The voice-over claims that "You don't need to go 'cold turkey' to beat cigarettes". The ad is part of a campaign to sell nicotine patches and chewing gum.



Maybe I'm exaggerating. There are some physical side effects. You feel better, your lungs feel fresher, the tightness in your throat goes away and your cough disappears.

Irritable and Sleepless

Some people say they feel irritable and can't sleep properly. Whoopee doo! Tough. I lived with a woman who tried unsuccessfully to give up tobacco and she chewed the nicotine gum and still felt irritable. She tried to stab me with a kitchen knife one night, but I think that was because I was behaving like a jerk and had nothing to do with giving up the smokes.

The makers of Nicorettes claim that people using their product are twice as likely to successfully quit smoking as those who don't. Lies and damn statistics!

All this tells you, is that people who resort to using Nicorettes are twice as determined to quit. I'd like to see the research on the difference between people who use Nicorettes and those who use a placebo. But that's not likely, is it?

Echinacea

You don't 'need' nicotine patches to give up cigarettes. If you don't use the patches or chew the gum, you will not suffer 'cold turkey'. And whether you use the patches or not, you will still crave a cigarette.

If you must use a nicotine replacement, take echinacea or pick your nose; it will work just as well and it's nourishing.

Personal Strategy

My personal and effective strategy for giving up cigarettes is as follows.

1. You must never bot a cigarette. You must make that an absolute rule.
2. Smoke your last packet of cigarettes and enjoy them right down to the last smoke. When they are finished, you simply don't buy another packet.
3. Should you weaken, whatever you do, don't bot. Go to the shop and buy a packet, but on the way there, see if you can talk yourself out of it.
4. So you went and bought a packet of cigarettes. Don't beat yourself up over it. Smoke them.

Enjoy them down to the last one, but stretch them out as long as you can. When they are finished, that's it.

By attacking the point of sale, you give yourself the best chance of quitting.

It may take you quite a few packets to get there, but eventually you will win.

It seems fair enough; you wear the patches or chew the gum and you don't go through 'cold turkey'. The trouble is, the whole thing is a big, fat, barefaced lie!

Cold Turkey

What is cold turkey? It is a slang phrase describing what a heroin addict suffers when they stop using, 'cold' without the assistance of any heroin substitutes like methadone or butranorphine.

When heroin addicts go cold turkey, they suffer hot and cold sweats, night sweats, slimy throat, nausea, diarrhea, restless leg syndrome, physical exhaustion, depression and an unquenchable thirst for more heroin. It is hardly the same as what a smoker experiences when they make the plunge. I don't think I've ever heard anyone say, "I'm sorry, I soiled my pants and stole all your CDs, I'm giving up cigarettes."

Nicotine Withdrawal

What are the symptoms for going cold turkey on the fags? I'll tell you, because I've done it (several times). There aren't any! Zilch!



But What If?

A COUPLE of years ago at the age of 83 my father had occasion to require the services of a hospital for the first time in his life.

After dutifully and diligently having paid private health care insurance for over 30 years he had his first opportunity to 'call on his insurer', so to speak.

A benign prostate operation saw him booked into a pleasant private hospital and the operation and after care was a complete success. A good news story in a field which produces so many horror stories.

Then again, after three odd decades of insurance contributions one would hope that his insurance company would have bent over backwards in providing assistance.

His insurance company has most definitely been on a winner having had him as a customer all these years, and having reached the age of 83 and never having required the services of a hospital, my father had also been very fortunate indeed.

Post the operation my mother sardonically remarked, "We would have been better off having invested all those contributions in real estate and paid for any health care costs out of our own pockets, and we would have been miles in front."

My father's pessimistic disposition brought out, "Yes but what if?"

Here lies the insurance industries most powerful selling tool, "But What If?"

At the other end of the spectrum of the punting aspect of insurance policies, and how someone can obtain the full benefits and more of a policy is the recent experience of my partner.

Being a seasoned traveller she took out a com-

prehensive medical insurance policy prior to leaving Europe recently.

In the tourist friendly region of Northern New South Wales, she had the misfortune to be preyed upon by various species of Australian fauna.



Surprise attacks, bites and the subsequent pain and discomfort saw her visiting several hospital emergency wards.

A magpie zeroed into the back of her head with the accuracy and guile of a kamikaze pilot.

A tick sought refuge and embedded itself into her skull and secreted it's 'calling card' for good measure.

A leech latched itself onto her ankle and the subsequent blood loss saw her revisiting Australian health care professionals.

If the wildlife weren't hostile enough, someone's Labrador sniffed out she was a cat lover and sank it's fangs into one of her breasts.

She would most certainly have preferred not to have utilised so many of the full benefits of her policy but fiscally speaking, she has come out in front in a matter of speaking.

Her insurer didn't hit the jackpot by taking on her business but in general, they more than make up for it by striking gold with customers like my father who dutifully keep up with their contributions for years and very seldom bother them.

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