

Quitting Smoking — Helping with Bad Habits

Most smokers know it's bad for them – but quitting can be difficult. Here are some reminders of the health hazards of smoking:

Smoking Kills. If you continue to smoke after you've had a heart attack, you're making it easier to have another one. It's as simple as that.

Cigarette smoke contains thousands of toxins, one of which is nicotine. Nicotine makes your blood sticky, irritates and narrows your blood vessels, raises your blood pressure, and lowers your good cholesterol. All these things increase your chance of having another heart attack. Smoking also increases your chances of dying after a heart attack.

Vaping delivers potent nicotine right into your lungs, which gets absorbed into your blood and can also cause heart attacks.

Secondhand smoke is dangerous too. If you are smoking around people you love, you are increasing their risk of having a heart attack by 30%.

Quitting smoking can be tricky – in some, it's a physical addiction, in others a mental addiction. Remember, quitting smoking is a process, not a single event.

Here are some points to help:

Smoking is expensive. Each pack costs around 12-15 CAD. If you smoke a pack a day, then you're spending 4500 CAD per year.

If you're smoking less than a pack a day and don't reach for a cigarette first thing in the morning, then you may be psychologically, rather than physically addicted, and it will be easier to quit without nicotine replacement.

There is good news. You don't have to wait for years for the benefits of quitting to kick in. The benefits of quitting smoking start almost immediately after you've stopped.

Action Plan

- **Pick a quit date.**

- Learn from your past experiences. If you've tried quitting before, write down what worked and what didn't. Identify your triggers and make a plan on how to avoid them.

Decide ways to deal with cravings before you set your quit date. Try to see where you might need help.

- Give yourself time to prepare and pick your date wisely.
- **Tell someone.**
- Accountability is important. Tell someone who supports your goal of quitting and update them on your progress. This someone is not your smoking buddy. Build a no smoking" social circle who will support you in your goals.
- **Stick to it.**
- Once you've decided to quit, stick to it. Have faith in your willpower, prepare yourself for the sacrifices you will have to make, and don't wait for yourself to relapse. Avoid your triggers, wait out cravings, engage in an activity, and surround yourself with positive people. Don't let failures stop you. Remind yourself why you decided to quit and keep working at it.
- **What to Expect**
- You might get cravings; if you've tried to quit before you know what these feel like. Don't let cravings scare you; they WILL pass.
- You might get a cough; your body is getting used to all that oxygen, and your lungs are clearing out the tar and toxins stuck in your lungs.
- You might feel hungry; your brain reacts to cravings by telling your body that it's hungry.
- You might feel down; your body is used to the high from nicotine, now it's learning to stay active without it.

These feelings will pass. Quitting smoking is the BEST thing you can do for your health!

Links

[Smoking and Tobacco](https://www.heartandstroke.ca/heart-disease/risk-and-prevention/lifestyle-risk-factors/smoking-and-tobacco) - <https://www.heartandstroke.ca/heart-disease/risk-and-prevention/lifestyle-risk-factors/smoking-and-tobacco>

[Nicotine Dependence Clinic in CAMH](https://www.camh.ca/en/your-care/programs-and-services/nicotine-dependence-clinic) - <https://www.camh.ca/en/your-care/programs-and-services/nicotine-dependence-clinic>

[Quitting Smoking App](https://breakitoff.ca/content_pages/download-the-app/) - https://breakitoff.ca/content_pages/download-the-app/

[STOP on the net \(SOTN\) program](https://www.nicotinedependenceclinic.com/en/stop/home) - which provides a free mail order of two months of nicotine replacement: <https://www.nicotinedependenceclinic.com/en/stop/home>