

HEALTH REALLY MATTERS

Going Smoke-Free

Quick facts about smoking

- Smoking is the leading cause of preventable early death in Canada.
- 1 in 2 people who smoke die from a smoking-related illness.
- Smoking greatly increases the risk of developing heart disease and lung disease and delays wound healing. Smoking is the primary cause of lung cancer and a contributor to many other types of cancer.
- Smoking decreases fertility, increases the risk of miscarriage, and increases the risk of the baby having a low birth weight and strabismus (squint eye). Children exposed to second-hand smoke have a higher risk of ear infections and breathing problems.
- Women who take a birth control pill and smoke are at greatly increased risk of stroke.
- Nicotine is the addicting substance in tobacco but it is not what harms your health.

Benefits of going smoke-free

- It is never too late to quit smoking. You will gain some benefit from quitting at any age.
- Symptoms like cough and exercise tolerance improve quickly while the risks of heart attack, stroke, and lung cancer decrease more gradually.
- A specific quit plan and having support are hallmarks of successful quitting.
- Research indicates that anyone smoking over half a pack per day will benefit from using some form of medication to help with quitting.
- When you quit smoking, your liver processes some substances, e.g. caffeine, differently. Thus it is recommended that you drink fewer caffeinated beverages when you quit smoking.
- The earlier in pregnancy a woman can quit smoking, the less likely she will relapse to smoking after the baby is born.



MEDICINE CENTRE
PHARMACY

Medications for Quitting Smoking

- Nicotine replacement therapy (NRT): available without a prescription as gum, lozenge, patch, inhaler, and spray. Ask your pharmacist about any programs that might help cover the cost of NRT. Combination NRT can be more effective than a single form (e.g. patch plus lozenge). NRT can be used during pregnancy and breastfeeding.
- Bupropion (Zyban®): a prescription medication that is taken twice daily. Adverse effects include dry mouth, insomnia, and, occasionally, strange dreams. Bupropion can be used in combination with NRT.
- Varenicline (Champix®): a prescription medication that blocks the effects of nicotine. It can cause some mild stomach upset and, less commonly, a negative change in mood.

What about E-Cigarettes?

- E-cigarettes almost certainly cause less harm to health than smoking. However, despite not emitting smoke, the devices do have some negative environmental impact (they contain a lithium battery and plastic components). In Canada e-cigarettes are only approved for sale without nicotine-containing cartridges but the general public has been able to access them. Long-term health effects of 'vaping' are not yet known.

Your Pharmacist can

- Help you develop a personalized quit plan, including determining which type of medication may be best for you.
- Inform you on how to get the most benefit from medication and deal with adverse effects.
- Refer you to local support groups or help lines.
- Determine whether dosages of any of your other medications should be adjusted once you quit smoking based on changes in metabolism or improvements in your health condition.

Help Lines, Websites, and Apps to assist you on your journey to be a non-smoker

- QuitNow: <http://www.quitnow.ca>
- Canadian quitline (toll-free): 1-866- 366-3667
- Running Room Program: <http://www.runtoquit.com>
- Phone apps: Smoke Free; QuitIt; Kwit; Cessation Nation; Livestrong MyQuit Coach; Quit Pro; Craving to Quit; QuitNow; (there are many more).

Notes: