

SMOKING CESSATION

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- After 20 minutes, your blood pressure and heart rate normalize.
- After 8 hours, the carbon monoxide level in the body decreases and the oxygen level in the blood increases to normal.
- After 48 hours, your chances of having a heart attack begin to decrease and your sense of smell and taste start to improve. You will start to smell better to others!
- After 72 hours, your lung capacity increases and breathing becomes easier.
- After 2 weeks to 3 months, blood circulation improves and your lung function can improve by up to 30%.
- After 6 months, coughing, sinus congestion, tiredness and shortness of breath improve.
- After 1 year, your risk of suffering a smoking-related heart attack drops by 50%.
- After 5 years, your risk of stroke normalizes.
- After 10 years, the risk of dying from lung cancer decreases by 50%.
- After 15 years, the risk of dying from a heart attack is equal to that of a person who has never smoked.
- There is also, understandably, a financial as well as a health gain when you stop smoking. It certainly puts more money in your pocket!

SMOKING KILLS

- Tobacco use is the world's single most preventable cause of illness and death.
- Tobacco smoke kills over 37,000 people in Canada each year.
- Tobacco contains nicotine (among 4000 other chemicals) which is absorbed quickly into the body through the lining of the mouth, nose and lungs. After one puff, levels of nicotine, a central nervous system stimulant, peak within 10 seconds and the effects wane in a few seconds necessitating another dose through another puff and so on.
- The average smoker will take in ten puffs of a cigarette in five minutes so a person who smokes 30 cigarettes per day will get 300 "hits" of nicotine to the brain each day.
- Once in the brain the nicotine activates a brain chemical called dopamine which helps regulate the pleasure centres in the brain and actually increases the desire to smoke more.
- Nicotine addiction is comparable to that of heroine and cocaine in its potential for dependency. Eight out of ten people who try smoking end up continuing.
- Continuing to smoke will create potential lung, cervical, esophageal and mouth cancers. It increases the risk of heart problems, stroke and impotence in males. Smoking also increases the risk of other health problems such as chronic lung disease.
- If you try nicotine replacement and are unsuccessful, your doctor may prescribe certain medications that may help. The goal of these medications is to reduce the intensity of the symptoms of nicotine withdrawal. They may also reduce the rate of failure by decreasing the desire to smoke. Even with this method, it is important to join a support group to help you through this important step in your life.

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IMPORTANT NOTES ON QUITTING:

- Have the will to quit.
- Write down the benefits of being a non-smoker.
- Have a good support network while quitting. Have a buddy to help you or take a course in smoking cessation. It will substantially increase your chances of success. These courses are sponsored by your local health unit or the Canadian Cancer Society.
- Use goal-setting techniques like saying “I am a non-smoker” every time you look in the mirror. Write down your goal as well.
- Use relaxation techniques like yoga, meditation, deep breathing and tai chi.
- Exercise daily. This helps reduce stress and keeps your weight in check. When you stop smoking, food tastes better so you may eat more. Exercise will help keep your weight stable. *You would have to gain 100 lb to cancel out the benefits of quitting smoking.*
- Change your daily routines to avoid situations in which you always had a cigarette.
- Take things one day at a time. Each day spent without smoking makes you healthier mentally and physically.
- The challenge is maintaining smoking abstinence after quitting. Most relapses occur within the first three months of quitting so this period is a critical time in the whole process.
- Your Medicine Centre pharmacists are available to give you information on quitting smoking. Add them to your smoking cessation team.

AIDS TO HELP YOU QUIT SMOKING

NICOTINE REPLACEMENTS

Because nicotine is so addictive, you can replace the nicotine you aren't getting from tobacco with nicotine supplied in a safer form. This replacement will help wean your body off the nicotine. Currently, these come in two forms... nicotine lozenges and patches.

Lozenges (in 2mg and 4mg strengths) contain nicotine and are meant to be placed between the cheek and the gums and sucked slowly until there is a strong taste of nicotine in the mouth at which time the sucking stops and lozenge is “parked”. It releases small doses of nicotine into the bloodstream where it quickly travels to the brain reducing nicotine craving and withdrawal symptoms. The number of lozenges used per day is reduced over about three months until the desire for nicotine disappears.

Nicotine patches, like the lozenges, help relieve withdrawal symptoms and cigarette cravings. They come in three different strengths and the starting strength depends on how many cigarettes you smoked per day. They can be worn for 24 hours a day although some people don't wear them at night. If you don't wear the patch all night and have an intense craving in the morning, you can use a nicotine lozenge to start the day. Those who smoke more than ten cigarettes per day will start usually with the 21mg patch tapering down to the 14mg patch after a few weeks then down to the 7mg strength.

It's very important not to smoke while on nicotine replacements.

By combining nicotine replacements with a good support group, your chances of succeeding are greatly increased. Nicotine replacement therapy allows you to make changes in your lifestyle without having to deal with withdrawal symptoms. These changes may include not going to places where you usually smoked or consuming food and drink that was linked to smoking.

Some people find other things to do with their hands, ways to distract their minds (like reading and crossword puzzles) and tricking your mouth with suckers, sugar-free gum other health foods. Your Medicine Centre pharmacist can help you with more ideas.

Second-hand smoke contains the same toxic chemicals as first-hand smoke so children can contract a number of health problems including bronchitis, pneumonia, middle ear disease, upper respiratory tract irritation and worsening of asthmatic symptoms. A child of at least one smoking parent has a greater chance of having lung diseases. The best advice to smokers who are to become parents is to quit, for their children's sake and their own sake. Also smoking and pregnancy do not mix. If you are pregnant, quit.

Third-hand smoke is currently being studied and refers to the smoke residue that lingers on carpets, furniture, walls, clothes and other materials for hours and days after a cigarette has been put out. This is being touted as a danger to babies and children. This is especially important because the child's developing brain is very sensitive to even low levels of toxins and may interfere with normal development.