

Family Health Care

Counselor

Ready to Quit Smoking?

Smoking can lead to tobacco/nicotine dependence and serious health problems. Cessation can significantly reduce the risk of suffering from smoking-related diseases. Tobacco/nicotine dependence is a chronic condition that often requires repeated interventions, but effective treatments and helpful resources exist. Smokers can and do quit smoking. Isn't it time you quit?



Your Health And Smoking

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About Smoking

The use of tobacco dates back as far as 5000 B.C. over time, smoking developed into a sophisticated habit supported by a multimillion dollar industry worldwide. Only recently were restrictions imposed on tobacco's availability, sale and use, due to health risks.

People start smoking for many different reasons, and once they get into the habit, it can be pretty hard to stop. If you're a smoker, it's important to understand the reasons behind your habit as well as the impacts of smoking on your health. The nicotine in tobacco creates psychological, social and physical dependence, all of which can be difficult to overcome when quitting.

- **Psychological:** People feel a need to smoke as a reaction to their emotions to help them cope with stress, anger or an emotional crisis.
- **Social:** Social influences can be hard for anyone to resist, regardless of age. Certain situations can trigger a desire to smoke such as drinking alcohol or coffee, working under pressure, talking on the telephone, driving or after eating a meal.
- **Physiological:** The physical addiction to nicotine results in a graduation of dosing, tolerance and withdrawal symptoms.

The Health Risks of Smoking

Smoking is the number one preventable cause of premature death and can lead to other health complications. The average male smoker will die about 7 years earlier and female smoker 10 years earlier than the average non-smoker, but life expectancy improves after a smoker quits.

- Smoking one pack a day doubles your risk of dying from a stroke.
- 30% of coronary artery disease deaths are caused by smoking.
- If you have other health risks like high cholesterol, your risk for cardiovascular disease is even greater.
- 80% to 90% of all lung cancer deaths can be linked to smoking.
- 30% of all cancer deaths are caused by smoking and includes cancer involving the mouth, lips, throat, pancreas, breast, stomach, liver, kidney and bladder.
- 80% to 90% of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease deaths are caused by smoking.
- Smoking complicates health issues such as diabetes, high blood pressure, ulcers, osteoporosis and circulatory disorders.
- If you smoke, you and your family can have an increased number of infections such as pneumonia or influenza.
- Smoking can contribute to eye conditions such as macular degeneration and cataracts.
- Erectile dysfunction and lower sperm counts have been linked to smoking.
- Smoking is associated with the development of gum disease and tooth decay.

In addition, smoking also causes your skin to wrinkle, reduces your sense of smell and taste, causes bad breath and stains teeth.

Second-Hand Smoke

You don't need to be a smoker to be exposed to the health risks associated with smoking. Second-hand smoke is the combination of smoke coming directly from a burning tobacco product and the smoke exhaled by a smoker. According to Health Canada, many of the chemicals in tobacco smoke are present in second-hand smoke. It is the health risks associated with second-hand smoke that has led to measures like the banning of smoking in public places, work places and in cars with children present.

- Second-hand smoke is linked to lung cancer in non-smokers. It is considered the second highest cause of lung cancer.
- Children whose parents smoke have an increased frequency of hospitalizations due to bronchitis and/or pneumonia, increased incidence of acute respiratory illnesses, increased number of coughs and increased ear infections.
- For people with asthma or other breathing problems, second-hand smoke can induce asthma attacks and other breathing distresses.
- Mothers who smoke give birth to babies with lower birth weights and an increased risk for birth defects.
- Second-hand smoke increases the risk of heart disease in non-smokers, especially when the exposure is chronic such as in a home environment.



Health benefits of quitting

Quitting smoking is the single best thing you can do to improve your health, longevity and quality of life. In fact, once you've smoked your last cigarette, the healing starts immediately!

Quit Time	Health Benefits
20 minutes	Blood pressure and pulse rate decrease
8 hours	Oxygen levels go back to normal and carbon monoxide levels drop
48 hours	Chance of having a heart attack decreases and sense of smell and taste start improving
72 hours	Bronchial tubes restart their cleaning mechanism, so breathing is easier and lung capacity increases
Two weeks to three months	Circulation improves, exercising becomes easier and lung capacity increases by as much as 30%
Six months	Decreased coughing, sinus congestion, tiredness, shortness of breath and colds
1 year	50% reduction in risk of having a smoking-related heart attack
5 years	Risk of having a stroke reduced to that of a non-smoker
10 years	Risk of dying from lung cancer decreased by half
15 years	Risk of dying from a heart attack becomes the same as a person who has never smoked

In addition to these health benefits, some common reasons to quit smoking include: saving money, whiter teeth, fresher breath, improved breathing, improved general fitness levels as well as being more confident and in control of your life.

Your Health And Smoking

Preparing to Quit

By spending some time preparing to quit, you will improve your chances of success.

- **Choose a “quit date”:** Your quit date shouldn't be so far in the future that you lose your motivation and shouldn't be so soon that you don't have time to prepare. Also, avoid dates that could be potentially stressful.
- **Identify your triggers:** Triggers are the things that make you crave a cigarette, like your morning coffee or stressful situations. If you understand the times or things that trigger your cravings, you can learn how to deal with them without lighting up.

7 Ways To Outlast Nicotine Cravings

1. Hide cigarettes, lighters and ashtrays so they are out of reach and out of sight or dispose of them completely.
2. Avoid situations that trigger your urge to smoke. Your morning coffee or your drink after a long day at the office can be substituted by freshly pressed juice, physical activity or an evening at the movies.
3. Try to keep your hands busy by playing with a rubber band, paper clip, stress ball, etc.
4. When you get the urge to put something in your mouth, chew sugar-free gum or use a straw; brush your teeth several times a day (the taste of cigarettes is altered afterwards); snack on carrots, celery sticks or other fresh foods; and drink lots of water.
5. Find someone to talk to, whether things are good or bad: a friend, colleague, family member or person who knows how to listen and restore your determination to lead a tobacco-free life.
6. Relax, get plenty of sleep, beautify your surroundings and learn relaxation techniques.
7. Reward yourself on a regular basis with the money you have saved from not buying cigarettes.

Surviving Quit Day

Smoking cessation is a lifelong decision. You may need several tries before you are successful. On average, it is estimated that people try six times before they successfully quit. Here are some tips to help you get through your quit day and beyond.

Use all the resources available: pharmaceutical medications, alternative therapies or professional consultations.

Rally your support: Remind your friends and family when your quit date is and that you will need their support over the next few days and weeks.

Stay busy: The first few days are all about distractions and keeping busy. Plan a lot of activities, make dates with friends and make time for the hobbies you like best. Practice stress management and relaxation techniques. Go out and get some exercise, whether it's a walk, swim or bike ride. The fresh air will do wonders. Keep your hands busy by texting a friend, doing a crossword, writing or squeezing a stress ball.

Shake up your routine and avoid temptation:

The most important thing you can do is break with activities and situations where you have strong mental connections to smoking. Try to stay away from people who smoke. Hang out with non-smokers, especially if you need to be places where you'll be tempted to smoke. Avoid those unnecessary temptations! Don't smoke, not even 'just one.'



Choosing Your Quitting Method

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The most effective and proven way to quit smoking is using a combination of stop smoking medication, counseling and/or support. We know that there is no single approach that works best for everyone. Here are some options to consider:

Pharmaceutical Treatments

If quitting smoking seems difficult, know that there are treatments available to help alleviate withdrawal symptoms and reduce the urge to smoke. Some of these drugs are covered by medical insurance plans under certain conditions.

Bupropion Tablets

Bupropion (Zyban™) is a prescription medication recommended to relieve the urge to smoke and minimize withdrawal symptoms. The treatment generally lasts 7 to 12 weeks, depending on the individual. Possible adverse reactions include headaches, insomnia and dry mouth.

Varenicline (Champix)

Varenicline (Champix) is a prescription medication recommended to reduce the urge to smoke. The treatment generally lasts 12 to 24 weeks depending on the individual. Possible adverse reactions include headaches, insomnia, nightmares and nausea.

Nicotine Replacement Therapy

Nicotine replacement therapy provides a portion of the nicotine to which the body is accustomed. It is offered in different forms and is available at the pharmacy without a prescription.

- Chewing pieces - you need to chew these with a “bite, bite, park” technique so that the nicotine release is gradual. Remember that drinking beverages such as coffee, tea, soft drinks, alcohol and citrus fruit juice at the same time can reduce their effectiveness.
- Skin patches - you should try to apply these at about the same time each day and remember to remove the old one.
- Lozenges - again, remember that drinking beverages at the same time can reduce their effectiveness.
- Oral inhalers - while these mimic smoking the closest, they can be difficult to use.
- You must quit smoking from the moment you embark on such programs.

These treatments are generally designed as three-step programs during which you gradually reduce your nicotine intake. The primary dose is established according to the number of cigarettes you smoke per day. As a result, the body adjusts to a tobacco-free life progressively. The total duration of these treatments is 8 to 12 weeks but may vary and be longer from one person to the next.

Possible adverse reactions:

- Gum: nausea, hiccups, burning sensation in the throat and stomach
- Patch: insomnia, nightmares, skin irritation where the patch is applied
- Inhaler: throat or mouth irritation, cough, headaches

Alternative Therapies

For some people alternative therapies such as acupuncture, hypnosis, phytotherapy and homeopathy are effective. The relaxing effect that some of these treatments provide can be beneficial when used as a complement to pharmaceutical treatment.

Before choosing an alternative therapy, consult a healthcare professional. Some people do not succeed on the first try. Don't despair.

Q & A

Ask Your Helpful FHCP Pharmacist

Q. Is changing to light or mild cigarettes a good way to quit?

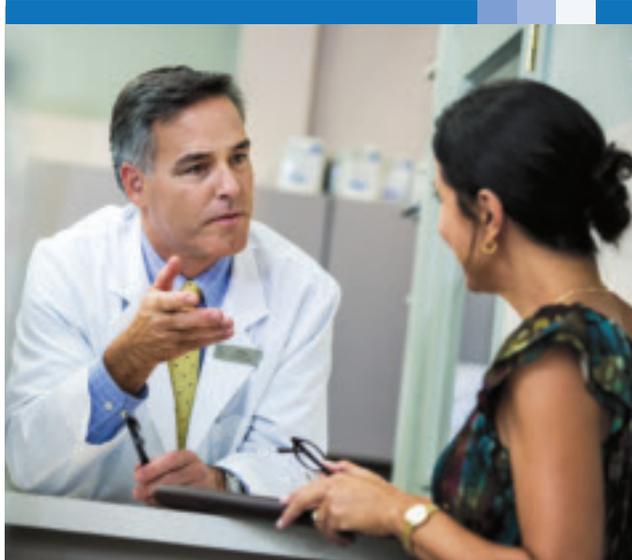
A. It's not the best method since you will inhale more deeply or often in order to obtain the same amount of nicotine. The result may be that you smoke more cigarettes, reinforcing other aspects of your smoking habit. Ideally, look at your smoking habit, identify and address your triggers, then choose a quit date. Instead of changing the type of cigarette, consider nicotine replacement therapy - and don't give up.

Q. Why do I have sleep problems when I try to quit?

A. One of the symptoms of nicotine withdrawal is difficulty falling asleep. Being prepared and checking your sleep hygiene can help reduce this problem - a dark, cool, restful bedroom; avoiding caffeine and heavy meals before bed; and regular bedtime and wake-times. Keeping a sleep diary may help you identify ways to improve your sleep. However, if you are using nicotine replacement therapy, you may find yourself waking up at night. To help solve this problem, avoid using this treatment in the evening or close to bedtime. Usually these side effects are temporary (2 to 4 weeks).

Q. Can I use two types of nicotine replacement therapy at the same time?

A. Some clinicians are recommending using a nicotine patch on a regular basis, and supplementing it with another formulation, usually chewing pieces, when severe cravings occur. The idea is to maintain the nicotine level in your body, and use chewing pieces for "breakthrough" cravings. Before you start such a regime, check with your FHCP Pharmacist to make sure that you are a suitable candidate. Remember that nicotine can be toxic to children, so keep it stored safely.



A Healthy Position

The Chemistry of Smoking

Cigarette smoke contains over 4000 chemicals such as tar, nicotine, carbon monoxide, cadmium, nitrogen dioxide, ammonia, benzene, formaldehyde, hydrogen sulfide, metallic ions and radioactive material like polonium 210. Some of these are known carcinogens, but it is the highly addictive nicotine that causes you to develop a smoking habit.

When you inhale, these chemicals are drawn into your lungs at high temperatures. In the lungs, these substances cause irritation and can have specific side effects. Carbon monoxide reduces the oxygen-carrying capacity of your blood.

Nicotine is able to increase your blood pressure and heart rate along with blood flow to the heart. In the periphery, that is your arms and legs, nicotine constricts your blood vessels which means you are more susceptible to extreme temperatures and have an increased risk of frostbite.

Nicotine acts fast - within 10-20 seconds it reaches your brain and causes a "high". Nicotine's rewarding effects include improved attention, memory, learning and task performance, pleasure, relaxation, relief of anxiety and stress, reduced hunger, body weight reduction, and pain relief. However, the health risks outweigh any "rewards".

Take The Check-Up Challenge

Check how many steps you take in a day; walking is an easy way to increase your activity level. Aim for about 10,000 steps each day. Add in extra steps wherever you can, for example, park farther from store entrances, get off the bus one stop early and walk the rest of the way or take a walk around the block in the evening.

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Next Month's Feature!

FEBRUARY 2014

Heart Health

February is Heart Health Month and it's time to think about how our everyday choices contribute to the health of our hearts and overall well-being. Your heart is your ultimate life support system - beating 100,000 times a day, bringing what's essential to every part of your body through a complex network of veins and arteries. When things go wrong, it can lead to serious disorders. Taking good care of your heart can help keep the beat going strong over the course of a lifetime.

In Next Month's Feature Find Out More About:

- Heart Disease
- Blood Pressure
- Cholesterol
- Weight and Heart Health
- Healthy Lifestyle Changes

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