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# Help a Smoker Quit

*One Step at a Time*



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# One Step at a Time print materials



## Booklet 1

### For Smokers Who Want to Quit

This booklet is for smokers who have decided that they want to quit smoking.



## Booklet 2

### For Smokers Who Don't Want to Quit

This booklet is for smokers who don't want to quit smoking. It won't tell them to quit but instead it will help them to better understand their relationship with smoking.



## Booklet 3 (this booklet)

### Help a Smoker Quit

This booklet is for friends and family who want to help a smoker quit.

**One Step at a Time** booklets can be ordered by phone or downloaded from the Canadian Cancer Society's website at [cancer.ca/OneStepAtATime](http://cancer.ca/OneStepAtATime).

**For more information, contact the Canadian Cancer Society.**

1-888-939-3333 | [info@cis.cancer.ca](mailto:info@cis.cancer.ca) | [cancer.ca](http://cancer.ca)

[Facebook.com/CanadianCancerSociety](https://www.facebook.com/CanadianCancerSociety)

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## Acknowledgments

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# Introduction

With your support, a person's quit journey can be made easier and have a greater chance of success.

Welcome! If you know someone who may want to quit smoking and you want to help, this is the booklet for you. The decision to quit must be made by the smoker, but supporting someone who is quitting can be rewarding. It can also be a challenge and this booklet will give you tools and strategies to encourage and support them along this journey. It will also help you to better understand what smoking is all about and what role you can play in supporting the smoker to quit.

The most important thing to remember is that you cannot make someone quit smoking. A person has to want to quit for reasons that are important to them. Quitting smoking can be difficult and they will need your support. No matter what, you must stay positive. In time, and with your support, they will succeed.

## Your booklet includes

Chapter 1 – What you need to know

Chapter 2 – Planning for success

Chapter 3 – It's all about quitting



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Chapter 1

Chapter 2

Chapter 3



# What you need to know

## In this chapter:

- understand the power of nicotine
- how and why people quit smoking
- how to know if someone is ready to quit smoking

Quitting is not easy. Remember that it can be a very strong addiction. A smoker is very brave for trying to give it up.

# The power of nicotine

Smoking can be a very powerful addiction. Many smokers may want to quit, but their addiction to nicotine is so strong that they are scared to try. Or maybe they have tried in the past, but the withdrawal symptoms were too much to handle.

Here is what you need to know about nicotine:

- It is the addictive ingredient in cigarettes.
- It only takes 7 seconds for a “hit” of nicotine to reach the brain (that’s 5 heartbeats).
- It reaches your brain faster than almost any other drug, which is one of the reasons why it is so addictive.
- Studies have found that nicotine is just as addictive as cocaine.

Once a smoker is addicted, the cravings can be extremely difficult to overcome. When smokers don’t smoke, their body can experience a variety of withdrawal symptoms. Some of the symptoms can be overwhelming. Don’t be fooled into thinking that a person who quits might just be a little cranky or moody when they can’t have a cigarette. They are trying to get a very powerful drug out of their system. Their entire body will want to fight this change and they will need a lot of strength to get through this.



Being addicted to nicotine may not be the only reason someone smokes. Each smoker has their own reasons for smoking. They may feel that smoking helps them to:

- deal with stress
- relax
- cope with boredom
- interact with friends
- concentrate
- control their appetite

# Talk about quitting

Quitting smoking is complicated, and for many people, it's the most difficult thing they will ever do. Quitting is not just about stopping smoking. It's also about changing how a smoker thinks and feels about smoking. It can also be about saying goodbye to something that has been a part of their lives for a long time.

Everyone has to find their own time to quit and has to work through it in their own way and at their own speed. Every quit is different. On average, it can take a smoker up to 7 attempts to finally quit. It rarely happens overnight and can be a long process with many slips and falls along the way. But with planning and support, being smoke-free is possible.

Each person will be motivated to quit by different things, and some people may never want to quit. So how will you know if a smoker wants to quit? And most importantly, how do you ask them about it and show them your support?

## Here are 3 tips and examples that might help you talk to someone who may want to quit:

**Tip 1:** When you talk to a loved one about smoking, don't be pushy or judgmental about it. Show them that you are genuinely concerned for their well-being.

“Quitting smoking is unbelievably difficult, but I know you have the strength to do it. I want to help because I love you and I want you to be around for a long time.”

Remember that in the end it is not your responsibility to ensure that the smoker quits. The decision to quit smoking must be made by the smoker, for their own reasons and in their own time.

**Tip 2:** You need to know who you're talking to. Tailor your message based on their personality. Choose a message that you think will reach them in a positive way.

Maybe they would appreciate a sincere, heartfelt message:

“I'm really worried about your smoking. I've noticed that you've been sick more often than usual this year and I'm wondering if you've given any thought to quitting.”

**Tip 3:** Keep your opinions to yourself. Really listen to what they want.

“Okay, I completely respect your decision to not quit right now. It's a really personal decision and I know that one day, when you think the time is right, you'll quit for good. I'll always be here to support you.”

The best message you can send to them is one of support and respect. Nagging and criticism will only push them farther away from you and may make quitting smoking seem less appealing.

# Fear factor

For many smokers, the fear of quitting keeps them from taking the leap to becoming smoke-free. Continuing to smoke feels like the safe choice. Quitting is the unknown and a journey that they may be afraid to take. Below are a few of the fears someone may have about quitting smoking.

## **Gaining weight**

Smokers may worry about gaining weight. A slight weight gain of 5 to 10 pounds is common among people who quit smoking and is a valid concern. The good news is that not everyone who quits gains weight, and weight gain can be controlled by healthy eating and being active.

## **Losing friends**

Smokers may worry that if they quit it will affect their friendships and social life. For many smokers, smoking is an important part of how they fit into their social circle. What will their smoking friends think if they decide to quit? Will they be supportive or will they feel abandoned and walk away? Most smokers are surprised to learn that their smoking friends can be very supportive and will often decide to quit alongside them.

**The unknown**

Especially for those smokers who have never tried to quit before, the fear of the unknown can be overwhelming. They may have watched friends and loved ones try to quit or have heard horror stories about the withdrawal symptoms. Quitting smoking is not easy and it is different for everyone. Reassure them that it's okay to be scared and that you will be there to help them through every step.

**Failure**

Smokers may fear that they will fail at quitting and disappoint not only themselves but also their friends and family who are supporting them. Every attempt to quit should be rewarded. Quitting for any length of time is a big accomplishment. Acknowledge that accomplishment and let them know that you will support them no matter what.

# Ready or not

It is important to know whether the smoker is interested in quitting. Use the following statements to help guide you on how best to help them.

**Scenario 1:** They cringe whenever somebody brings up their smoking. They become defensive and are not open to talking about it when you ask about quitting.

They are not interested in quitting. Respect their decision and leave it alone. Be ready to help them later when they want to quit.

**Scenario 2:** They have talked about quitting. They are still committed to smoking but have made comments about maybe wanting to quit.

The next time they bring up the idea of quitting, let them know that you think they can do it and that when they're ready, you'll be there to support them however you can.

**Scenario 3:** They have talked about quitting and maybe even set a quit date.

They are ready to quit! This is your opportunity to let them know how proud you are of them and to tell them that you're there to offer any support they might need.

Remember that it's their decision. Your concerns for them are valid, but you can't make them change their mind about smoking.

**If they don't want to quit:** Don't push the subject. Keep this booklet on hand for when they do decide to quit.

**If they are thinking about quitting or are ready to quit:** Keep reading! Tell them that you want to support them and are willing to do whatever it takes to help them quit. This booklet will help you to help them.





# Planning for success

## In this chapter:

- what you can do to help
- plan for triggers and distractions
- how to quit together

Maybe you've already tried to help someone and they weren't successful. That's okay. Remember that it's not your fault if they don't succeed this time.

# How you can help

Once a smoker has decided to quit, they are more likely to be successful when friends and family offer their help and support.

## **Ask how you can help**

Remember that quitting is different for everyone. So ask how you can be most helpful to them. If they aren't sure, let them know that you are there if they need anything. This will show that you care and that you really want to help.

## **Offer them resources**

Many smokers who want to quit benefit from reading self-help booklets such as *For Smokers Who Want to Quit - One Step at a Time*. However, self-help books are not for everyone, so don't push it on them. Leave a copy handy in case they decide to pick it up. Visit the Canadian Cancer Society's website at [cancer.ca/OneStepAtATime](http://cancer.ca/OneStepAtATime) to order a copy.

## **Show that you believe in them**

Tell them you know they can make it – even if they've tried to quit before and were not successful. Remind them that most smokers have to try quitting a few times before succeeding for good. Tell them how much you admire them for trying to quit and that you're there for them no matter what.

**Acknowledge their fears and anxiety**

Cigarettes have been a steady friend for a long time and quitting can be scary. These feelings are completely normal. Let them know that you understand their doubts and fears about quitting. Reread the Fear Factor section in the previous chapter.

**Share your own experiences**

If you've quit smoking yourself, let them know how glad you are that they are quitting. Share with them all of the good things you're experiencing by being smoke-free. Try to stick to the more immediate effects like fresher breath, clean-smelling clothes, car and home, and no more stained teeth or fingers. Avoid telling them that it was easy for you to quit. Respect that their experience is unique and this is their challenge to overcome.

Take the lead from your friend. Be sensitive to what they need and never assume you know what is best for them. At different times, they may or may not want your help. Be present but give them the space they need. They appreciate that you want to help, but sometimes they just need to do it on their own.

## Create a plan

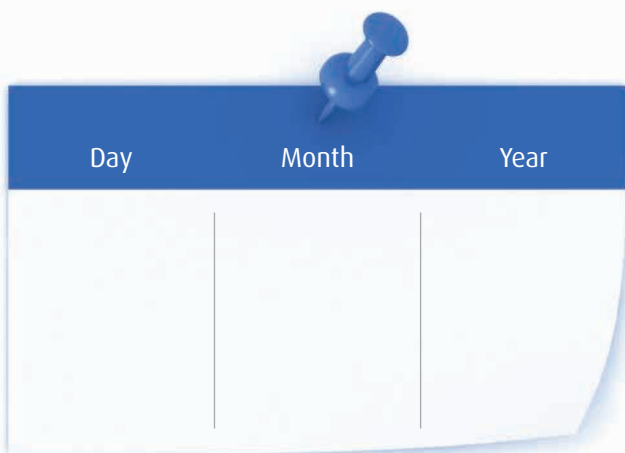
Smokers who create a solid plan for quitting are more likely to succeed. You can't make this plan for them – they have to develop it based on what they want – but you can help guide them.

Talk to the person who is quitting about these important parts of a plan:

### Set a quit date

By setting a specific date, the smoker is committing to quitting and will have something to work toward. The day they choose should be a routine one, where nothing new is happening. Suggest that they avoid certain days:

- where a deadline or something else might be distracting
- where other things may be the focus for the day, like birthdays or anniversaries
- just before the beginning of their menstrual cycle, if they're a woman



Day	Month	Year

**Enlist friends, family and other supports**

Encourage them to tell their friends and family that they have decided to quit. The more support they have, the better their chances are for staying smoke-free. Suggest other sources of support such as their doctor, pharmacist or other healthcare professional, or their local quitline listed on the back of this booklet.

**Decide how they want to quit**

They might want to quit on their own, use a self-help resource like *For Smokers Who Want to Quit*, or use a medical quit aid like the patch, gum or prescription medicine. Encourage them to speak with their doctor, pharmacist or other healthcare provider if they have any questions.

**Prepare for triggers**

Talk about all of the things, places and people that may make them want to smoke. Work with them to make concrete plans for how they will deal with these situations. (You can find more on how to do that on the next page.)

**Create a smoke-free environment**

Talk about making a fresh start and cleaning out the things that might remind them of smoking. Offer to help clean up their home or car. Encourage them to throw away packs of cigarettes, lighters and ashtrays.

# Understand triggers

A big part of being able to quit successfully means planning ahead about how to cope with urges and triggers to smoke. A trigger is a place, person or thing that will make your friend crave a cigarette. Triggers are all around and it's important that they acknowledge them and think about how they will deal with them, before they quit.

Here are some examples of common triggers:

- drinking alcohol
- being at parties, bars or pubs
- drinking coffee
- waking up in the morning
- being with certain friends or family members
- feeling stressed or anxious
- finishing a meal
- being bored
- taking a break at work or school

Making a “quit kit” is a great way to support them. Include things they could use to help them cope with triggers, like gum, a water bottle, a stress ball and a personalized motivational message. Be creative!

You can offer to help by thinking of some simple things they can do whenever a trigger gives them an urge to smoke. Here are some ideas:

- Tell them to call or text you. This will distract them and keep them focused on something else until the craving passes or until they leave the trigger situation.
- Avoid taking them to places where they might encounter a trigger. For example, if one of their triggers is coffee, instead of going to the coffee shop, go for a walk and grab some ice cream instead.

Suggest other ideas such as:

- trying out the 4 Ds (see next page)
- going for a walk
- telling you their reasons for quitting
- using the online quit calculator at **[cancer.ca/QuitCalculator](http://cancer.ca/QuitCalculator)**

# Manage cravings with the 4 Ds

A great tool to help them get through cravings or other withdrawal symptoms is the 4 Ds. Suggest that they try any combination of these when they experience symptoms.



**4s Deep breathing:** Breathe in and out slowly. When you do this, inhale deeply, hold your breath for a few seconds and then slowly let it out. Deep breathing will help you to relax and focus on something else.

**4s Drink water:** Keep a bottle of water on hand. Drink the water slowly and keep it in your mouth a while before swallowing. This will help to wash the bad stuff out of your system and will help keep your hands and mouth busy. Drinking water can also help with coughing or phlegm buildup.

**4s Distraction:** Distract yourself by getting up and going somewhere or doing something. Go for a walk, call a friend, head to the gym or walk the dog.

**4s Delay:** Cravings don't last as long as most people think they do. It might feel like forever, but it's really about 5 to 10 minutes. Convince yourself that you can wait 10 minutes, and try one of the other Ds above.



## Be quitters together

A great way to show support is to join in and be a quitter too. Help them quit smoking by quitting something as well.

Do you have an addiction that you could give up? It could be coffee, soft drinks, Facebook or video games. Whatever it is, let your friend know that you're willing to give it up completely to support them while they quit smoking.

By quitting something as well, you're showing your friend how much you believe in them, how much you care and how much you want to support them. You'll be putting yourself through your own withdrawal symptoms. You might not get what it's like to quit smoking, but you can experience the act of quitting something and that will mean a lot to them.

If you're a smoker, maybe this is an opportunity for you to think about quitting. Your friend is more likely to stay away from cigarettes if you're also not smoking. But you don't have to quit to be of help as long as you do not smoke around them and you hang out in smoke-free places.



# It's all about quitting

Quitting can take a long time. Offer your help and support when needed over the long term.

## **In this chapter:**

- understand withdrawal symptoms
- how you can offer rewards
- signs of success
- accept slips and falls

# Withdrawal symptoms

While quitting smoking, your friend will experience some withdrawal symptoms. These are the body's way of responding to being without nicotine and they are a normal part of quitting smoking. Everyone is different and will adjust to not smoking in different ways.

It is important that you know about withdrawal symptoms so that you can recognize them and be ready to offer support. You may be surprised by how severe and overwhelming your friend's symptoms are. Remember that they are removing an addictive drug from their body. This drug is as addictive as cocaine and just as difficult to quit.

Here is what you might expect:

- They will have very strong cravings and urges to smoke, especially during the first few weeks.
- They may have mood swings caused by nicotine withdrawal – they may be irritable, anxious, fidgety or angry.
- They may be stressed and overwhelmed.
- They may experience a lot of coughing or phlegm as their body cleans out the tar and other toxins.
- They may gain weight.
- They may find it hard to concentrate or think clearly.
- They may have trouble sleeping.

These symptoms can become extreme and it can be tough to be supportive, especially if they're grouchy. You may find it difficult to be around your friend. Remember that these symptoms will go away over time. Empathize with how they're feeling and let them know that these symptoms are normal and that they won't last long.

## Offer rewards

As much as possible, praise and reward the smoker for the amazing job they are doing. Offer rewards for getting through a day, a week or a month without smoking. Rewards don't have to be complicated or expensive – make them fun and something they probably wouldn't normally do for themselves!

Here are some ideas:

- Surprise them with flowers.
- Make them a funny, personalized card.
- Surprise them on their lunch hour and go for a walk.
- Catch a movie.
- Cook them a special meal.
- Go to a spa or create a spa night at home.
- Get tickets to a concert.
- Take a day trip together.
- Organize a sports game with a group of friends.

Remember to avoid rewards that may trigger smoking; it helps to know what their triggers are. Start rewarding them from the very beginning and make sure they know that they're doing a great job.

You deserve a reward too! Your help can make the difference.

## Signs of success

If this is your first time helping a smoker quit, then you might be asking yourself how you'll know how they're feeling and if they're making progress.

The first 7 to 10 days can be the toughest and they may need extra help getting through those. They may want to talk a lot about how they're feeling or they may need distractions during coffee breaks or after finishing a meal. Don't be afraid to ask them how they're doing and how they're feeling. Don't just ask whether they are still not smoking.

Acknowledge trigger situations or their cravings and praise them for sticking with it. They could have smoked, but they didn't, and they need to know how important that is.

Every day will present new challenges that your friend may not have anticipated, and they will need your support and understanding as they learn how to cope with their new smoke-free life. Every smoke-free moment and day is a success.

## Slips and falls

Slips and falls are normal.

A *slip* is when they might have one cigarette or even just a puff of a cigarette in a moment of weakness. They realize that it was wrong and they are still committed to quitting.

This is not a big deal and doesn't mean that they have failed – it was just a tiny bump in the road. Encourage them to keep moving forward with their plan and to use the slip as a learning opportunity. Help them figure out what triggered them to smoke and what they can do in the future to make sure they don't give in again. Support them and encourage them to keep moving on.

A *fall*, or a *relapse*, is when they return to regular smoking or purchase a pack of cigarettes. Relapses are common. Encourage them to think of it as an opportunity to learn and be better prepared for the next time. They might want to jump right back into quitting again or they might decide that now isn't the best time. Support them in whatever decision they make and let them know that you'll be there again to support them when they're ready.

Quitting smoking is hard and not everyone will succeed on their first try. Don't lay blame.

Quitting smoking is a learning process, and they have learned how to do it better the next time.

Try to feel good about your efforts to help and be there when your friend is ready to try quitting smoking again.



## Friend first, smoker second

In the end, no matter what choice they make or whether or not they succeed at quitting, they are your friend or loved one first and a person who smokes second. Show them that you care no matter what you think about their smoking.

Remember these tips as you move forward:

- The decision to quit smoking must be made by the smoker, for their own reasons and in their own time – you cannot make them quit.
- You can't quit for them, but by supporting them, you help make the quitting process a little easier.
- Avoid lecturing or nagging them – it's not usually helpful.

Quitting smoking is hard, but it is possible. Every year, thousands of people quit. If your friend really wants to quit, they will get there and you will be there to support them and celebrate the day they can say they are smoke-free.

## For more information

If you want to understand more about how people quit smoking, or you would like more information about the resources and programs in your community, call one of our information specialists toll-free at **1-888-939-3333**, email us at **info@cis.cancer.ca** or visit our website at **cancer.ca**.

Smokers' helplines are available across Canada where trained quit coaches are available for free, confidential help over the telephone. Please call your local toll-free number printed on the back of this booklet.



**Call a smokers' helpline at one of these toll-free numbers.**

British Columbia  
**1-877-455-2233**

Alberta  
**1-866-710-7848**

Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario,  
New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, Yukon  
**1-877-513-5333**

Quebec  
**1-866-527-7383**

Nova Scotia  
**811**

Newfoundland and Labrador  
**1-800-363-5864**

Northwest Territories  
**1-866-286-5099**

Nunavut  
**1-866-368-7848**



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