

---

# Not Sure You Can Quit Smoking?

Quitting is one of the best things you can do for your health.

---

Why quit smoking? The benefits are numerous:

- **Within 8 hours:** carbon monoxide levels drop, leaving more oxygen for your body and thus more energy.
- **Within 24 hours:** your body will start feeling better, as it clears out the toxins found in cigarette smoking.
- **Within two days:** the risk of having a heart attack is decreased.
- **At 2-12 weeks:** your lung function improves, as does your circulation.
- **At 1 year:** your risk of coronary heart disease is cut in half, compared to a person who still smokes.
- **At 2 years:** bladder cancer risk is halved and cervical cancer risk is reduced compared to smokers who continue to smoke.
- **At 5-15 yrs:** the risk of stroke is reduced to that of a non-smoker.
- **At 5 years:** the risk of death from lung cancer is almost cut in half.
- **At 10 years:** decreased risk for cancers of the mouth, throat, esophagus, kidneys and pancreas.

Beyond health benefits, your wallet will thank you too. All that money you would normally spend on cigarettes can be used towards a healthy, fun activity, a new hobby, or perhaps a night out with friends or family.

## Quitting can be stressful – but smoking isn't the answer!

- Smoking can reduce the levels of important enzymes in the body – and have an anti-depressive effect. For some smokers, quitting can cause a change in stress levels.
- This may be why some people reach for a cigarette when they're feeling stressed. But smoking is not an effective solution! In fact, a recent study showed that after quitting, many smokers felt **less stress and anxiety** compared to those who did not successfully quit (their stress actually went **up**).



Hair and clothing stops smelling like smoke



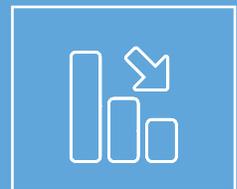
Teeth are whiter and breath is fresher



Skin will look and feel better



Improved sense of taste and smell



Decreased risk of oral cancer



Decreased risk of heart disease



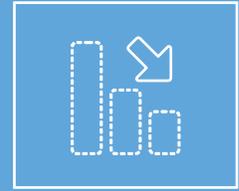
Increased lung function; decreased risk of COPD



Less irritability



Decreased risk of erectile dysfunction; decreased risk of infertility



Decreased risk of urinary tract cancers

## It's natural to have ups and downs – but try to stay motivated.

These 3 tips may help:

1. Find your **why**. Ask yourself why you're quitting. Write down your reasons and keep them on hand. Every day, take a look at them to help you stay on track.
2. Picture your future without smoking. What does it feel like? Are there things you're doing that you wouldn't if you still smoked? How are people reacting to the 'new' you? Picturing your future can help you stay motivated in the present.
3. Post pictures that motivate you. These could be of your children and/or partner, a sport you've had to give up, a travel destination – anything that, in a glance, reminds you of your overall reason to quit.

## You may feel that you're not ready to quit completely – and that's okay.

- Even a small reduction in the number of cigarettes you smoke is a step in the right direction.
- Try taking one cigarette out of your daily routine. Or, reduce the number of puffs you take when you do light up.
- You can try using nicotine replacement therapy (such as gum) to help prolong your smoke-free time.
- It's important to still work towards quitting completely. Reducing cigarettes, although beneficial, will not lead to the health benefits listed above.

## When you feel it's time to take a bigger step, there is support.

- Get in touch with a smoking cessation counselor.
- Try a counseling session via phone.
- Join a smokers support group in person or online.
- Visit The Lung Association ([www.lung.ca](http://www.lung.ca)) and Smokers Helpline ([www.smokershelpline.ca](http://www.smokershelpline.ca)) to learn more.

Adding a medication to counseling support can **DOUBLE** your chances of quitting. Ask a healthcare professional to help find a treatment that is right for your needs.