



DECIDING TO QUIT SMOKING

DID YOU KNOW THAT TOBACCO USE IS THE LEADING CAUSE OF EARLY DEATH, DISEASE AND DISABILITY?

WHY SHOULD YOU QUIT SMOKING?

Quitting smoking can improve the quality and length of your life and the lives of the people around you.

PHYSICAL BENEFITS AFTER YOU QUIT:

Within 20 minutes: your blood pressure, heart rate, body temperature in your hands and feet return to normal.

Within 8 hours: the amount of oxygen in your blood improves.

Within 24 hours: your sense of smell and taste improves.

Within 3 days: your lung capacity improves, your airways relax and if they are not damaged, breathing is easier.

2 weeks to 3 months: your circulation improves and walking is easier. Your lungs begin to work better.

At 1 year: your risk of heart disease is reduced by half.

At 5-15 years: your risk for heart disease, stroke and cancer continuously lowers.

FACTS ON TOBACCO USE

Smoking cigarettes and other forms of tobacco is mentally and physically addictive. More than 45,000 Canadians over the age of 35 are estimated to die every year as a direct result of smoking. Tobacco use increases your risk of heart disease, cancer, lung disease, pregnancy complications, stomach problems and gum problems.

FACTS ABOUT SECOND-HAND SMOKE

There are many chemicals in second hand smoke and 50 of them are known to cause cancer. Exposure to second-hand smoke causes between 1,100 and 7,800 deaths per year in Canada, at least one third of them in Ontario. Children exposed to second-hand smoke are more prone to breathing problems and lung infections.

WHAT CAN YOU EXPECT FROM YOUR NURSE OR OTHER HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONAL?

Ask: You will be asked if you use tobacco and if you are ready to quit.

Advise: You will be informed of the importance of quitting.

Assist: You will be offered help and information, based on your needs.

Arrange: You will be scheduled for a follow-up appointment or referred to others who can help you.

TOOLS THAT CAN HELP YOU QUIT SMOKING

Nicotine Replacement Therapy (e.g., nicotine patch or gum): Available to help replace nicotine from cigarettes; may help lessen the withdrawal symptoms and cravings.

Medication (e.g., Zyban®): May help to lessen the cravings during withdrawal.

Support: Available from many sources – Smokers' Helpline 1-877-513-5333; friends and family; programs available at your school or workplace; on-line support programs; self-help books. Your nurse or other healthcare professional can help you decide which to use.

TIPS THAT CAN HELP YOU SUCCEED IN QUITTING SMOKING

- Using a calendar, pick a “quit date” to stop smoking. This date should make sense to you in your busy life. Stick to this date!
- Prepare yourself for situations that you know will be difficult without smoking.
- Take it one day at a time. When you first stop, try to change the places where you do your daily routine.
- Keep busy, try to increase your level of activity. Congratulate yourself often: think positive.
- Ask at least one friend and some family members to help support you through the process.
- Count or save the money you would have spent on cigarettes and treat yourself to something special.
- Don't try “just one” cigarette, it will take you back to the start.

WHAT HAPPENS IF YOU START SMOKING AGAIN?

It is important to realize that you have not failed, it is common for smokers to relapse several times while in the process of quitting permanently. Each attempt makes it more likely that you will successfully quit smoking in the future and offers you chances to learn new skills and techniques that will help you the next time.

This information fact sheet is developed as a supplement to the RNAO Nursing Best Practice Guideline document for nurses. Its intent is to increase your knowledge and involvement in making decisions about your health. The nursing best practice guideline, *Integrating Smoking Cessation into Daily Nursing Practice*, is available for public viewing and free download at www.rnao.org/bestpractices.

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