



Canadian  
Cancer  
Society

Société  
canadienne  
du cancer

# For Smokers Who Don't Want to Quit

*One Step at a Time*



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

# 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 (this booklet)

### 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

### 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)  
[Twitter.com/CancerSociety](https://twitter.com/CancerSociety)

## Acknowledgments

Based on a booklet written by Paul McDonald, PhD, Thelma Maxwell, RN, BN, and Kelli-an Lawrance, PhD.

Cover photographs: © iStock images  
Licensed material is for illustrative purposes only; persons depicted are models.

## Introduction

Welcome! If you smoke and don't really think about quitting, this booklet is for you. It has been written for people who don't want to quit smoking.

This booklet will not tell you to quit, but instead will provide you with information and activities to help you think about why you smoke and how it affects you and your family. It will also help you see how smoking fits into your life now and in the future.

Most smokers want to quit but they may feel unprepared or doubt that they can do it.

## Your booklet includes

Chapter 1 – You and smoking

Chapter 2 – Smoking and how it affects others

Chapter 3 – Know the facts

Chapter 4 – You and quitting

# Table of contents

<b>Chapter 1:</b>	<b>You and smoking</b>	<b>1</b>
	Pleasures of smoking	2
	Where it all began	4
	How addicted are you?	5
<b>Chapter 2:</b>	<b>Smoking and how it affects others</b>	<b>7</b>
	Is someone pushing you to quit?	8
	It's about the smoke, not you	11
	The environment	12
<b>Chapter 3:</b>	<b>Know the facts</b>	<b>15</b>
	What's in a cigarette?	16
	Know the risks	18
	Stay strong	20
	It's a social thing	22
<b>Chapter 4:</b>	<b>You and quitting</b>	<b>25</b>
	Quitting has its benefits	26
	Let's recap	27
	Get off the fence	28
	For more information	29

Chapter 1

Chapter 2

Chapter 3

Chapter 4

# You and smoking

## In this chapter:

- what you like about smoking
- your history with smoking
- how addicted are you?

If you hadn't already started smoking, what reasons would you have to start now?

## Pleasures of smoking

There are probably many reasons why you smoke. You wouldn't still be doing it if you didn't like something about it. Here's what smokers say about why they like to smoke.

### **“It relaxes me.”**

Many smokers believe that smoking relaxes them. In fact, it does the opposite to your body. Smoking makes your heart beat faster, your breathing quicken and your blood pressure rise.

*If it's not the cigarette that calms you, then why do you feel relaxed when you smoke?*

- Smoking releases dopamine - a chemical in your brain that creates feelings of pleasure. It's what makes you sigh in relaxation after a few puffs, but this feeling of relaxation lasts for only a few moments.
- Stopping for a smoke gives you a break from work or something that causes you stress.
- Having a cigarette takes your mind off your worries.
- You like to smoke, so it seems calming.

### **“It curbs my appetite.”**

Nicotine can suppress your appetite and may increase your metabolism slightly but smoking puts an enormous amount of stress on your heart and lungs. The stress on your heart from smoking a pack of cigarettes per day is equal to being 90 pounds overweight!

### **“It helps me stay focused.”**

Smokers often say that smoking helps them concentrate and stay focused. That's because nicotine is a stimulant. Unfortunately, smoking also blocks blood vessels, arteries and veins, starving the brain of the oxygen it needs to function properly.

*Here are a few other things that smokers say they like about smoking. What reasons do you have for smoking?*

- It's a social thing I do with my friends.
- I like the way it tastes and feels in my mouth.
- It gives me something to do when I'm bored.

## Where it all began

You may light up at least a few times a day, but can you remember that very first cigarette? That first puff? It may have been a long time ago or it may have happened recently. Write down what you remember about the time you took your first drag.

Where were you?

---

How old were you?

---

Who were you with?

---

Why did you keep smoking?

---

Why do you smoke now?

---

Bet you didn't think after that first cigarette that you'd still be smoking today.

Thinking about where it all began is a great way to start thinking about the role smoking has played in your life. What motivated you to start smoking in the first place is probably not the reason you continue to smoke today.

You might not be able to pinpoint that moment when you became addicted. There is often no warning.

## How addicted are you?

Cigarettes contain nicotine, which is highly addictive. When you inhale the nicotine, it rushes straight to your brain in under 7 seconds, giving you that “hit” you’ve been craving. The more you do this, the more your brain craves it and you can quickly become addicted.

**Take this short quiz to figure out how addicted you are to nicotine:**

On average, I smoke 15 or more cigarettes each day.  Yes  No

I usually smoke within 30 minutes of waking up in the morning.  Yes  No

I find it difficult to go for more than 4 hours without smoking.  Yes  No

When I try to quit or cut back on the amount I smoke, I get irritated, dizzy and frustrated and have trouble concentrating, sleeping or eating.  Yes  No

If you answered **No** to all of these questions, you probably have a low level of addiction to nicotine.

If you answered **Yes** to 1 or 2 of these questions, you are probably moderately addicted to nicotine and may need counselling, medicine or self-help – or a combination of these – to quit.

If you answered **Yes** to 3 or more of these questions, you are probably highly addicted to nicotine. Your best chance to successfully quit will be with counselling, self-help or medicine or a combination of these.

## Smoking and how it affects others

### In this chapter:

- how to deal with people who want you to quit
- the negative effects of cigarettes on the environment

Every time you have a smoke, take a minute to imagine the good things that would happen if you quit.

## Is someone pushing you to quit?

There are probably people in your life who would like you to quit smoking. They may have talked to you about it nicely, made snide comments or even nagged you about it. There may also be people who haven't actually come out and said anything, but you still feel they are passing judgment on you. Do any of these comments sound familiar?

- You know that thing is going to kill you?
- I can't believe he/she has the nerve to smoke here!
- You reek like an ashtray!
- Enjoying your cancer-sticks?
- I'm not interested in kissing an ashtray.

The people in your life who want you to quit care about you. What they may not understand is that they can't make you quit, and nagging and negative talk isn't helping you. In fact, the pressure they put on you may *prevent* you from thinking it through and, perhaps, making your own decision to eventually quit.

It may be hard for you to talk to someone if you feel they're judging you and don't understand your perspective. If you try to explain how you feel, they may start acting differently.

The next time you get into a discussion with someone about smoking, try one of these suggestions:

### **Don't argue or get mad**

This doesn't help anyone, and the stress and frustration will probably only make you want to smoke more. They really just want to help you but don't know how.

### **Tell them what you need**

They nag because they feel powerless and don't know how to help. Find a way to communicate and tell them what you need, even if you just want them to be quiet and give you some space.

### **Talk about how you feel**

Next time you're speaking with someone about your smoking, try using some of the following statements to tell them how you feel:

"I understand how you feel about my smoking and I really do appreciate your concern for my health."

"When you nag me about it, I feel like you're judging me and that makes me feel like I can't talk to you about how I feel."

"The more you bug me about it, the more upset I get and the less likely I am to want to talk to you about it."

“If you could ease off a little, I would be less defensive and we could talk about my smoking without arguing.”

“I know that smoking isn’t good for me and I can understand why it might upset you that I do it anyways. I need you to respect the fact that I’m addicted and quitting is a big decision.”

### **Talk about quitting**

Try either of these statements to let them know how you feel about quitting:

“I’m not thinking about quitting right now, but when I decide to start planning for it, I’d like to be able to come to you for support. Would that be okay?”

“I am thinking about quitting, but not right now. When I do decide to quit, I would like to have your support. Could I come to you for support when I’m ready?”

## It’s about the smoke, not you

It can be annoying to be told where you can and can’t smoke. You have probably already noticed the many policies and bylaws in place that limit the places you can light up. These policies are designed to make places safe for everyone who uses them.

It’s fairly common for policies to be in place in these areas:

- parks, playgrounds and beaches
- workplaces
- in your car, if there are children present
- sports and recreational fields, as well as spectator areas
- outdoor concert and entertainment venues
- multi-unit dwellings and apartment buildings
- university and college campuses

In the end, you need to remember that it’s about the smoke, not you. These policies are not created to annoy you. They are created to protect others from the smoke and the deadly chemicals found in cigarettes.

## The environment

How tobacco is grown, manufactured and smoked all have negative effects on our environment.

### Deforestation

It takes a lot of trees to produce cigarettes. Each year, nearly 600 million trees are destroyed to provide fuel to dry the picked tobacco. Globally, tobacco curing uses 11.4 million tons of solid wood annually. Look at it this way: for every 300 cigarettes produced, 1 tree is destroyed.

Trees are also chopped down to produce the paper to wrap each cigarette. A modern cigarette manufacturing machine will use more than 6 kilometres of paper per hour.

### Cigarette butt litter

Experts say that cigarette butts rank at the very top of litter problems. At least 4.5 trillion non-biodegradable filter-tipped cigarettes are deposited annually all around the world. And 1 cigarette can take up to 10 years or more to decompose.

### Children and animals

When cigarette butts are thrown on the ground, especially in parks and playgrounds and on beaches, they can easily be picked up and eaten by children or animals. It only takes a few cigarette butts to cause serious harm to their health. This is a major reason why many communities are implementing strong smoke-free policies in popular outdoor recreation areas.

### Water pollution

When cigarette butts are left on the ground, they can ooze chemicals like cadmium, lead and arsenic into the waterways – through lakes, ponds or water drains. These chemicals, along with the other deadly chemicals found in cigarettes, can seriously harm the wildlife and vegetation in the water. Fish eat the cigarette butts, which can make them sick or kill them, and the chemicals pollute the water, which can change the growth of the fish and vegetation living there.

### Pollution and pesticides

Tobacco is grown all around the world, but most of it is produced in poorer countries. When tobacco is grown, it affects the quality of the soil and steals nutrients from other crops. In many of these countries, food supplies are short and tobacco crops take away from the production of healthy food.

Tobacco crops need to be sprayed for pests and disease often and in large doses. The use of pesticides can affect the health of the farmers, and the chemicals can leak into the ground, spoiling other crops and entering the community water supply.

Quitting smoking could be the single most important thing you do for your health.

## Know the facts

### **In this chapter:**

- what's in a cigarette
- understanding the health risks
- smoking and physical activity
- how smoking affects your social life

## What's in a cigarette?

There are about 600 ingredients in cigarettes. When lit, they create more than 4,000 chemicals, many of them poisonous and more than 70 known to cause cancer. Here is a list of some of those chemicals and where else you might find them.

- acetone – found in nail polish remover
- ammonia – a common household cleaner
- arsenic – used in rat poison
- butane – used in lighter fluid
- carbon monoxide – found in car exhaust fumes
- formaldehyde – used as embalming fluid
- lead – used in batteries
- methanol – a main component in rocket fuel
- nicotine – used as an insecticide
- tar – used for paving roads

Most of these chemicals are added to the cigarettes to make them taste better and burn better and to keep you hooked. Three main chemicals found in cigarettes are nicotine, tar and carbon monoxide.

*Nicotine* is a drug naturally present in the tobacco plant and the addictive component in a cigarette. When you smoke, nicotine enters your lungs, is absorbed quickly into your bloodstream and travels to your brain in a matter of seconds.

By quitting smoking, you can avoid all of these dangerous chemicals and your body will begin to heal itself.

*Tar* is a substance that sticks to the lining of your lungs and stains your teeth and fingernails. Tar is a term used to describe all of the particles that come from tobacco smoke. These particles contain chemicals known to cause cancer.

*Carbon monoxide* is a poisonous gas that is released when a cigarette is lit. It is inhaled into your lungs and interferes with your body's ability to send oxygen to your heart and other important organs. This is why your heart has to beat faster – the carbon monoxide is fighting the oxygen molecules to get to the heart.

## Know the risks

Smoking poses a real risk to your health. It's your choice, but be aware of the risks you're taking.

### It affects your quality of life, appearance and reproductive system

Compared to people who have never smoked, smokers will:

- have a shorter life by an average of 8 to 10 years
- be at higher risk of developing cancers such as lung, mouth, throat, pancreas, kidney and bladder
- be treated more often for high blood pressure, high cholesterol, pneumonia, influenza, peptic ulcers and osteoporosis

Smokers may see signs of:

- deep wrinkling, premature greying of hair
- tooth loss, yellowing teeth
- worsened acne

Female smokers have a higher risk of:

- cancer of the cervix (womb)
- menstrual problems, including painful, irregular or missed periods
- reduced fertility
- early menopause

Male smokers have a higher risk of:

- impotence
- low sperm count
- deformed or genetically damaged sperm

### It affects your family

If you are trying to have a child, smoking may have many negative effects. Compared to couples where neither partner smokes, couples where one or both partners smoke have a higher risk of:

- having a miscarriage, stillbirth or premature birth
- delivering a baby with a low birth weight (which is associated with a higher risk of heart disease, stroke, high blood pressure, obesity and diabetes for the child)
- the baby having a cleft palate or cleft lip
- the baby having sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS)

### Second-hand smoke can influence the health of your family and pets:

- The chemicals in cigarette smoke contribute to asthma, heart disease and emphysema.
- Children are more likely to have breathing problems, such as asthma or bronchitis, chronic ear infections and more severe allergies.
- Pets have a higher risk of developing cancer and other health problems.

The good news is that you can start to change these outcomes if you quit smoking.

## Stay strong

Smoking can have a real impact on your ability to exercise and stay fit. Smoking can even make it difficult to walk up stairs, play with your children or keep up with your partner in the bedroom.

Here are some facts about smoking and exercise:

- Smokers suffer shortness of breath almost 3 times more often than non-smokers.
- Smokers have less endurance compared with non-smokers.
- A smoker's heart beats 3 times faster than a non-smoker, so when competing, your body wastes a lot of heartbeats just trying to keep up.
- Smokers are more likely to experience injuries, and those injuries take longer to heal.
- Smoking affects your ability to gain and maintain muscle.

But there is a bright side! You can reverse some of the damages caused by smoking and get back into great shape. Only a week or 2 after your last cigarette, you will notice increased endurance and improved general health. It's never too late to quit and start down a new path toward being healthy.

And while you're a smoker, you should still exercise. Keeping fit is an important part of staying healthy. Talk to your healthcare provider before starting a vigorous exercise routine. Here are some great ways to stay active in smoke-free places and outdoors:

- Go bowling on a Saturday night.
- Try relaxing with yoga.
- Take the stairs instead of the elevator.
- Walk to work.
- Go for a bike ride.

## It's a social thing

Smoking can have an impact on your personal and social life. It can influence who you date, who your friends are and even the places you go. Being smoke-free is fast becoming the norm in society, and this change could affect your life.

### Smoking and relationships

Smoking may be something that you share with your partner. Or maybe that person doesn't smoke or decides to quit. Smoking can cause arguments or create tension in a relationship. Arguments could start over things like the cost of smoking, its health effects and how it affects your physical chemistry. Smoking can put limits on a relationship and sometimes that adds a lot of stress.

### Smoking and dating

Dating can be hard enough as it is but it can be even more difficult for smokers. Studies show that 56% of Canadians would not date a smoker if they were single and dating. In fact, 6 out of 10 Canadians said that if a date smoked, it would decrease the date's attractiveness. So, stepping outside to have a smoke during a date may not leave the best impression.

Are you putting off quitting because you're worried you'll lose your friends? You might be surprised by how supportive they can be. They may just decide to quit with you!

### Smoking and friendships

Smoking can affect your social life. Your smoking friends may start to quit, leaving you out of the social circle. Your non-smoking friends may no longer support your choice and move on. Also, it is becoming more and more difficult to find a place to smoke when out with friends. In many places, even smoking on patios is banned, and you can only stay home so many times before you get fed up.

Smoking also uses up a lot of extra cash. That money could be used to have a fun night out with friends or family at a movie theatre, buy some new exercise gear or go on a vacation.

Quitting smoking can help you build new relationships and possibly mend some old ones. Rely on your friends and family for support – they only want what is best for you.

## You and quitting

### **In this chapter:**

- understanding the benefits of quitting
- reviewing what you've learned so far
- where to find more information

Quitting smoking is hard, but it is possible. Every year, thousands of people go smoke-free. You can do it too ... when the time is right.

## Quitting has its benefits

Even though you may not be ready to quit now, here are some important facts to consider about what you can expect when, and if, you decide to quit.

After your last cigarette:

 <p>Your blood pressure and pulse rate will return to normal.</p>	 <p>You'll notice that you can breathe easier. Your oxygen levels will be back to normal and your chance of having a heart attack will go down.</p>
 <p>Your lungs will start to clear out the mucus. All that coughing will be a good sign.</p>	
 <p>You'll be nicotine-free. Your senses of taste and smell will improve so you'll probably start to enjoy food more.</p>	 <p>You'll have more energy. Your lung capacity will increase and your bronchial tubes will relax, so breathing and exercising will get easier.</p>
 <p>Your risk of having a heart attack will drop by 50%.</p>	
 <p>Your risk of dying from lung cancer will be cut in half.</p>	
 <p>Your risk of coronary heart disease will be the same as the risk for someone who has never smoked.</p>	

And think of some of the other benefits:

- You'll have more money in your pocket.
- Your home will smell better.
- Your friends and family will stop nagging you to quit smoking.
- Your family, friends and pets won't be exposed to second-hand smoke.

## Let's recap

You've learned about the reasons you smoke and how it affects others. You've also learned to see how smoking fits into your life.

- There are many reasons why you choose to smoke – some are more important to you than others. Despite the dangers and personal consequences associated with smoking, it continues to be an important part of your life.
- Smoking may not always be a part of your life, but it is right now. When you're ready, you know you can reach out for support.
- You can reverse many of the negative effects of smoking by quitting – when the time is right for you.

Keep these things in mind. You may not be interested in quitting today, but you may not always want to be a smoker. When you're ready to quit, you'll know.

## Get off the fence

If you're on the fence about quitting smoking, it may be time to jump off and try it. Quitting smoking is a big decision and it can be scary, especially when you don't know what to expect.

### **I'm too addicted to quit smoking**

It's true that nicotine is highly addictive, but there are ways to break that addiction. Nicotine replacement therapies (patch, inhaler, gum, lozenge, spray and medicines) are effective and can help you break your addiction. You can beat your addiction and win.

### **I'll quit when I start a family**

Most people know that smoking is bad for their unborn baby. They promise themselves that they will quit smoking when they get pregnant. There's just one catch. Quitting isn't easy and there is a chance that you may not be able to quit at that time. On average, it takes a smoker 7 tries to be successful at quitting. Don't leave it too late.

### **I'm a social smoker, so I don't need to quit**

There is no safe level of exposure to tobacco. Even if you only smoke socially, you still have a higher risk of getting cancer, heart disease and lung disease, among other things. And social smokers are at risk of becoming regular smokers.

There is never a perfect time to stop smoking, so "now" could be the right time for you.

## 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, Nova Scotia,  
Prince Edward Island, Yukon  
**1-877-513-5333**

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

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

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

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



**Canadian Cancer Society**    **Société canadienne du cancer**

**1 888 939-3333 | [cancer.ca](http://cancer.ca)**  
**TTY 1 866 786-3934**

This is general information developed by the Canadian Cancer Society.  
It is not intended to replace the advice of a qualified healthcare provider.

The material in this publication may be copied or reproduced without permission; however, the following citation must be used: *For Smokers Who Don't Want to Quit - One Step at a Time*. Canadian Cancer Society 2013.