



Canadian
Cancer
Society

Help Someone Quit

One Step at a Time



1 888 939-3333 | cancer.ca

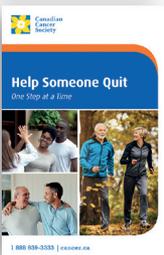
Help Someone Quit One Step at a Time



Booklet 1

You Can Quit

This booklet is for people who smoke and may or may not be ready to quit.



Booklet 2 (this booklet)

Help Someone Quit

This booklet is for friends and family who want to help someone quit smoking.

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

For more information, contact the Canadian Cancer Society.

1-888-939-3333 | info@cis.cancer.ca | 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.

Photographs: © iStock images

Licensed material is for illustrative purposes only; persons depicted are models.

Introduction

You can help someone quit.

If you want to help someone quit smoking, this booklet is for you. You can't make the decision for someone else to quit. But you can encourage them in meaningful ways.

This booklet gives you step-by-step tips and strategies for supporting someone as they quit smoking. It helps you understand what they're going through, so that you can support them without judgment.

Quitting may be one of the hardest things they'll ever do. Just remember that you can't make someone quit smoking. They have to want to quit for their own reasons. In time, and with your support, they can succeed.

Make this booklet work for you.

As the title suggests, quitting smoking works best one step at a time. And while your friend or loved one is working through the steps of quitting, you'll follow your own steps for helping them.

The first section helps you understand the challenge the person you're helping is about to face. Next you'll learn about the steps and stages of quitting. Cold turkey (stopping smoking abruptly) is a popular way to quit, but it isn't easy. A quit plan can help someone quit successfully.

In the final section, you'll learn how to continue supporting them after their quit day. They may not succeed at first. Quitting often takes more than one attempt. But with your help, they can quit.

If you have questions as you read through this booklet, call us at 1-888-939-3333 or visit SmokersHelpline.ca.

Suggest this free, helpful resource.

We have a booklet for people who are trying to quit smoking. It helps them make a plan for quitting and take steps toward living smoke-free. They learn tips and tricks and complete activities, working step by step through the challenges of quitting.



For a copy of *You Can Quit*, call us at 1-888-939-3333 or visit cancer.ca/OneStepAtATime.

We respectfully acknowledge that many First Nations and Métis communities have a sacred relationship with traditional tobacco. The information in this booklet refers to commercial tobacco products, such as packaged cigarettes, unless otherwise stated.

**Your
booklet
includes**

Part A – What you need to know

Part B – Planning for success

Part C – Quitting can be an ongoing process

Table of contents

Your step-by-step guide starts here.

Part A	What you need to know	1
	Step 1: Understand the power of nicotine	2
	Step 2: Talk about quitting	4
	Step 3: Learn some of the reasons for not quitting	6
	Step 4: Ask if they're ready	8
Part B	Planning for success	11
	Step 1: Show, don't tell	12
	Step 2: Help create a plan	14
	Step 3: Understand triggers and distractions	16
	Step 4: Quit together	18
Part C	Quitting can be an ongoing process	21
	Step 1: Know the withdrawal symptoms	22
	Step 2: Offer rewards	23
	Step 3: Recognize success	24
	Step 4: Accept slips and falls	25
	Step 5: Show your support	26

Part A

Part B

Part C

Part A – What you need to know

In this section:

- Step 1: Understand the power of nicotine
- Step 2: Talk about quitting
- Step 3: Learn some of the reasons for not quitting
- Step 4: Ask if they're ready

Step 1:

Understand the power of nicotine

Nicotine is the addictive ingredient in cigarettes. It's so addictive that many people who want to quit smoking are scared to try. They may have tried to quit before, but the withdrawal symptoms were too much to handle.

Here's what you need to know:

- Studies show that nicotine is as addictive as cocaine.
- Inhaled nicotine takes just 7 seconds (5 heartbeats) to reach the brain. That's faster than almost any other drug, and it's one reason why nicotine is so addictive.
- Nicotine is also an ingredient in many e-cigarettes.
- On average, it can take up to 30 attempts to finally quit smoking.

Don't be fooled into thinking that a person who quits might just be a little cranky or moody because they can't have a cigarette. They're trying to get a very powerful drug out of their system. It takes great strength to get through this. Their whole body will fight back against quitting.

Being addicted to nicotine may not be the only reason someone smokes. People have other reasons for not quitting. They may believe that smoking helps them:

- relax
- handle stress
- cope with boredom
- interact in social situations
- concentrate
- control their appetite

Step 2: Talk about quitting

For many people, quitting smoking is one of the hardest things they'll ever do. That's because it's not just about stopping smoking – it's also about changing how they think and feel about smoking. And if someone has been smoking for years, quitting means saying goodbye to something that's been a part of their lives for a long time.

Everyone has to find their own time to quit and work through it in their own way at their own pace. Every quit experience is different. Quitting rarely happens overnight and can be a long process with many slips and falls along the way. But with planning and support, it's possible to live smoke-free.

Each person is motivated to quit by different things. Some people may never want to quit. So how will you know if your friend or loved one wants to quit? How do you ask them about it and show them your support?

Don't be pushy or judgmental.

Remember that this booklet is called *Help Someone Quit*. Nagging doesn't help. Focus on showing them that you are genuinely concerned for their well-being.

Know who you're talking to.

Tailor your message based on their personality. Try to reach them in a positive way. For some people, a heartfelt message might be the right approach. For others, upbeat and encouraging words may be the best way to support them.

Really listen to what they want.

The best message you can send is one of support and respect. Criticizing people for smoking could push them away and make quitting seem less appealing. Remember that quitting is their decision and your job is to support them when they're ready.

Step 3: Learn some of the reasons for not quitting

For many people who smoke, the fear of quitting keeps them from taking the leap to becoming smoke-free. Continuing to smoke feels like the safe choice. Quitting is an unfamiliar journey that they may be afraid to take. Here are some of the fears someone may have about quitting smoking.

“What if I gain weight?”

Gaining weight is a valid concern. It's common for people who quit to gain about 2 to 4 kilograms (5 to 10 pounds). The good news is that not everyone who quits gains weight. And weight gain can be controlled by healthy eating and being active.

“My friends smoke. What will they think if I decide to quit?”

A person who smokes may worry that quitting will affect their friendships and social life. Smoking may be an important part of how they fit into their social circle. If they quit, will their friends be supportive or walk away? Most people who smoke are surprised to learn that their smoking friends can be very supportive and may even decide to quit with them.

“I don’t know what to expect. I’m afraid to go down that road.”

For people 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 heard about terrible withdrawal symptoms. Quitting smoking isn’t easy. Let them know that it’s OK to be scared and that you will be there to support them.

“What if I can’t stick with it?”

People who smoke may be afraid that they’ll disappoint not only themselves but also the friends and family who are supporting them – like you. But quitting for any length of time is a big accomplishment. Show them that you’re proud of them every time they try. And remind them that they have your support no matter what.

Step 4: Ask if they're ready

It's important to know whether your friend or loved one who smokes is ready to quit. The following scenarios are common and understanding them can help you decide how best to help someone quit.

They cringe whenever someone mentions their smoking. They become defensive and don't want to talk about it.

They're not ready to quit yet. Respect their decision and be ready to help them later when they want to quit.

They have talked about quitting. They still smoke regularly but they make comments about the possibility of quitting.

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

They have talked about quitting and maybe even set a quit date.

OK, they're ready to quit! This is your chance to show them how proud you are of them. Let them know that you're there to offer any support they may need. And keep reading! This booklet will help you help them.



Part B – Planning for success

In this section:

- Step 1: Show, don't tell
- Step 2: Help create a plan
- Step 3: Understand triggers and distractions
- Step 4: Quit together

Step 1: Show, don't tell

Once someone has decided to quit smoking, they're more likely to succeed when friends and family offer their help and support.

Ask how you can help.

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're there if they need anything. This will show that you care and that you really want to help.

Offer them resources.

Many people who want to be smoke-free can benefit from reading and doing the activities in our free booklet *You Can Quit*. But a self-help guide isn't for everyone, so don't push it on them. Tell them that they can always download a copy at cancer.ca/OneStepAtATime.

Acknowledge their fears and anxiety.

When someone has smoked for a long time, the idea of quitting can be scary. Mixed feelings are completely normal. Let your loved one know that you understand they may have doubts and fears about quitting. Reread step 3 of part A.

Share your own quitting stories.

If you have quit smoking yourself, tell them how glad you are that they're quitting. Share all of the good things you've experienced by being smoke-free – especially the early benefits like fresher breath and clean-smelling clothes. Avoid saying that it was easy for you to quit. Respect that their experience is unique and this is their challenge to overcome.

Follow their lead.

Be sensitive to your friend's needs, and don't assume that you know what's best for them. At times they may want your help and at other times they won't. Be supportive but give them space when they need it. Sometimes they just need to do it on their own.

Step 2: Help create a plan

Someone who is trying to quit smoking is more likely to succeed if they make a plan. You can't make their plan for them – they need to develop it based on their own goals. But you can help. Be ready to talk to them about these planning tips.

Set a quit date.

By setting a date, they're committing to quitting and will have something to work toward. There will never be a perfect day to quit. But it helps if they:

- choose a day when their schedule is routine and nothing else new is happening
- avoid days with a deadline or something that might cause extra stress
- avoid special days like birthdays or anniversaries
- avoid the days just before their monthly period if they get one

Get support from friends and family.

Encourage them to tell their friends and family that they've decided to quit. The more support they have, the better their chances for staying smoke-free. And suggest other sources of support, like their doctor or pharmacist. They can also call 1-866-366-3667 toll-free and talk to a trained, non-judgmental quit coach.

Discuss how they want to quit.

They might want to quit on their own. Maybe they'd prefer to use a self-help resource like *You Can Quit*. Or they may want to try quit aids like the patch, gum or a prescription medicine. Encourage them to talk to their doctor or pharmacist if they have any questions.

Create a smoke-free environment.

Help them make a fresh start by getting rid of items they connect with smoking. Offer to help clean their home or car and throw away cigarettes, lighters and ashtrays.

Prepare for triggers.

Talk to them about all of the people, places and things that may make them want to smoke. Offer to help make concrete plans for how they'll deal with these situations. Learn more on the next page.

Step 3: Understand triggers and distractions

A trigger is a person, place, event or thing that will make your friend crave a cigarette. Triggers are all around and it's important to acknowledge them. As you read in step 2, quitting successfully means planning ahead to cope with urges to smoke.

Some common triggers are:

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

To help your friend cope with triggers, you can try these ideas:

- Tell them to call or text you. This could help distract them by giving them something else to focus on until the craving passes or until they can leave the situation.
- Avoid taking them places where they might encounter a trigger. For example, if coffee is a trigger for them, suggest that you go for a walk and get some ice cream together instead of going to a coffee shop.
- Put together a “quit kit” with things to help them cope with triggers, like gum, a water bottle, a stress ball and a card with a personal message.

3 go-to techniques for coping with cravings

You can suggest tools to help your loved one get through cravings or withdrawal symptoms. Suggest that they try any combination of these techniques when they have the urge to smoke.

Focus on the breath. Encourage your loved one to breathe in deeply, hold the breath for a few seconds and then slowly exhale. Even try doing it with them. It sounds simple, but it can be quite challenging to slow down and focus. Doing it is relaxing and should take attention off the craving.

Drink some water. Suggest that they keep a glass of water nearby and drink slowly, holding the water in their mouth for a moment before swallowing. Drinking water helps with coughing and phlegm. And it can help keep their hands and mouth busy.

Find distractions. It may feel like cravings last a long time, but they usually only last for about 5 or 10 minutes. Encourage your loved one to do something that gets their mind off the urge to smoke. It's best to be active. They could try doing yoga, taking the dog for a walk or going for a bike ride. If you're free, join them!

Step 4: Quit together

A great way to show your 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? Coffee, sugar, social media or video games? By quitting something too, you're showing your friend how much you believe in them and want to support them. You'll be putting yourself through your own withdrawal symptoms. You might not understand 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 smoke, 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 helpful – the important thing is that you don't smoke around them. Try to hang out with them in smoke-free places.



Part C – Quitting can be an ongoing process

In this section:

- Step 1: Know the withdrawal symptoms
- Step 2: Offer rewards
- Step 3: Recognize success
- Step 4: Accept slips and falls
- Step 5: Show your support

Step 1: Know the withdrawal symptoms

While quitting smoking, your friend or loved one will experience some withdrawal symptoms. These are the body's way of responding to nicotine withdrawal. They're a normal part of quitting.

Everyone is different and adjusts to not smoking differently. You may be surprised by how severe and overwhelming your friend's withdrawal symptoms are. Remember that they're getting an addictive drug out of their body – a drug that is as addictive as cocaine and just as difficult to quit.

Learn to recognize withdrawal symptoms and be ready to offer support. Your friend may:

- have very strong cravings to smoke, especially during the first few weeks
- go through mood swings caused by nicotine withdrawal and be irritable, anxious, fidgety or angry
- feel stressed and overwhelmed
- cough up phlegm as their body cleans out tar and other toxins
- gain weight
- find it hard to concentrate or think clearly
- have trouble sleeping

These symptoms can be extremely hard to deal with. At times you may find it hard to be supportive of your friend, especially if they're cranky or grouchy. Remember that these symptoms are normal. Remind your friend (and yourself) that they won't last long.

Step 2: Offer rewards

Always praise the progress of someone who's quitting. 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 something fun that they probably wouldn't normally do for themselves!

You could:

- send them flowers or another unexpected gift
- surprise them on their lunch hour and go for a walk
- go to a movie
- cook them a special meal
- create a spa night at home or go to a spa together
- get tickets to a concert
- take a day trip together
- organize a sports game or activity with a group of friends

It helps to know what your friend's triggers are. Review step 3 of part B and be careful to avoid rewards that may trigger smoking. Start rewarding them from the very beginning and let them know that they're doing a great job.

Step 3: Recognize success

Is this your first time helping someone quit smoking? You might wonder how they're feeling and if they're making progress. Don't be afraid to ask them how they're doing.

The first 7 to 10 days can be the toughest. They may need extra help coping during that time. They may want to talk about how they're feeling or they may need distractions during coffee breaks or after meals.

Every day will present new challenges that your friend may not have expected. They'll need your support and understanding as they learn how to cope with their new smoke-free life. Remind them that every smoke-free moment is a success.

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

Step 4: Accept slips and falls

Quitting smoking is hard and not everyone will succeed on their first try.

Someone who is trying to quit might slip. They might smoke one cigarette or take just a puff in a moment of weakness. But they realize it was wrong and they're still committed to quitting.

A slip is normal and not a big deal. It doesn't mean that they've failed – it was just a tiny bump in the road to being smoke-free. Encourage them to stay on track and to use the slip as a learning experience. Help them figure out what triggered them to smoke and what they can do to avoid future slips. Be understanding and let them know that they still have your full support.

A fall (relapse) happens when someone goes back to regular smoking or buys a pack of cigarettes. Falls are also common on the path to becoming smoke-free.

Encourage them to think of the fall as a learning opportunity and a chance to be better prepared the next time they try to quit. They might want to jump right back into quitting again, which is great! Or they might decide that now isn't the best time. Accept whatever decision they make and let them know that you'll be there to support them when they're ready to try again.

Step 5: Show your support

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

Remember:

- Quitting smoking is their decision, for their own reasons and in their own time. You can't make them quit.
- Your positive support can make their quitting process a little easier.
- Avoid lecturing, nagging or judging them – it's not helpful.

Quitting smoking is hard, but it is possible. Every year, thousands of people quit. If your friend really wants to quit, they'll get there. And you'll be there to support them, cheer them on and celebrate the day they can say they're 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**.

Canada's national quitline has trained quit coaches who can offer free, confidential help over the telephone. Call **1-866-366-3667**.



Canadian
Cancer
Society

1 888 939-3333 | 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: ***Help Someone Quit – One Step at a Time***. Canadian Cancer Society 2020.