

days are the worst. Most of the nicotine should be gone from your system after about ten days. However, the effects can linger and people who used to smoke can still get occasional cravings years later. The withdrawal period will be a difficult time for you. Below are some techniques that have helped people cope with nicotine withdrawal:

Keep your hands busy - Try playing with a puzzle, a marble or a pencil instead of picking up a cigarette.

Keep oral substitutes handy - Things like carrots, pickles, raisins or sugarless gum may work.

Take a bath or shower - This will help you relax.

Take deep breaths - Try inhaling fresh air instead of nicotine.

Brush your teeth often - Enjoy the feeling of a clean mouth and fresh breath. You may want to visit your dentist to have your teeth cleaned. If you don't smoke, they will remain clean.

Avoid your smoking triggers - Wait until you feel that you can cope with them.

Exercise - This will help keep you busy, help you relax and help keep you in shape.

Can I quit smoking?

Although quitting smoking may be difficult, it is not impossible. Any attempt will be a learning experience and will make you stronger. Every time you don't succeed, learn what helped and what hindered your attempt and use this knowledge to try a different approach. It takes a combination of practice, hard work and support to succeed. Quitting will be one of the most important things you will ever do - a thing that will have a significant impact on the rest of your life.

Life After Smoking

8 hours - The carbon monoxide level drops in your body and the oxygen level in your blood increases to normal.

48 hours - Your chances of having a heart attack start to go down and your sense of smell and taste begin to improve.

72 hours - Your lung capacity increases as bronchial tubes relax and make breathing easier.

2 weeks to 3 months - Your circulation improves and your lung functioning increases up to 30%.

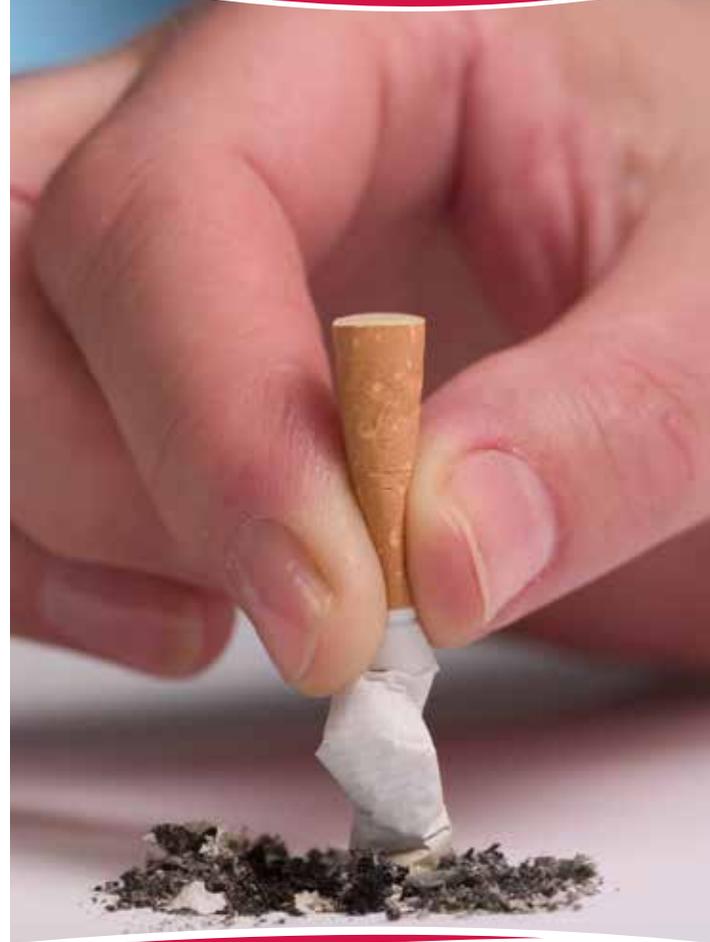
6 months or less - Coughing, sinus congestion, tiredness and shortness of breath improve.

1 year - The risk of smoking-related heart attack is cut in half.

10 years - The risk of dying from lung cancer is cut in half.

15 years - The risk of dying from a heart attack is equal to a person who has never smoked.

You Can Quit Smoking



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Why is it difficult to quit smoking?

Ask anyone who has quit smoking and they will tell you that it is not easy. As a matter of fact they will tell you that it is quite difficult. Most people try several times before they are successful. There are two reasons why it is difficult to quit smoking:

1. The nicotine contained in cigarettes is highly addictive. Nicotine is a stimulant that is just as addictive as heroin. The high concentration contained in a cigarette enters your brain within 10 seconds of taking a puff and, in the beginning, provides a bigger lift than chocolate or coffee. This boost is only short term, therefore, people need to absorb increased amounts of nicotine to maintain their mood and energy. As you consume more nicotine, your brain changes and begins to need nicotine in order to allow you to function normally. This is why people who are trying to quit will experience withdrawal symptoms such as reduced energy, irritability and difficulty concentrating.

2. Smoking is a learned behavior. This means that it is associated with other things and done automatically. Often people will smoke when they drink coffee or alcohol or when they take a break from work. Usually lighting up is an automatic response to a particular circumstance. One of the keys to quitting smoking is changing your behavior.

What are the benefits of quitting?

Your health - we all know that smoking is bad for your health. By quitting, you will live a longer and healthier life. More than 45,000 Canadians die prematurely each year due to tobacco use. Quitting will significantly lower your risk of having a heart attack, stroke, cancer and future respiratory problems. In addition you will look and feel younger, you will have more energy, your teeth will be whiter and your sense of taste and smell will greatly improve.

The health of others - Second hand smoke kills at least 1000 Canadians a year. When you smoke, you not only put your health at risk, but also the health of your loved ones and co-workers. Your family, especially your children, will be healthier if you quit. Children who live with a smoking parent are more susceptible to middle-ear problems, bronchitis, pneumonia and have worse asthma than children with non-smoking parents. If you are pregnant, quitting smoking will improve your chance of having a healthy baby.

Saving money - Smoking cigarettes is not a cheap habit. Add up the cost of your cigarettes for a week; then calculate the cost over a year. Just think what you could do with that extra money. In addition, insurance premiums are cheaper for non-smokers than for smokers. Your furniture and clothes will stay fresher and last longer so you can save money on cleaning and replacement costs.

To set a good example - Your children are more likely to smoke if you do. By quitting, you show determination and set an example for them not to smoke.

What should I do if I want to quit smoking?

The decision to quit smoking is not one that is usually made quickly. It requires a lot of thought and planning. Below are some techniques that have helped people quit smoking:

Set a special quit date - decide the date in advance so you can prepare for it. If you smoke more at work, you may want to quit while on vacation when it will

be easier. If you don't want to quit cold turkey, start cutting down before this date. Condition yourself before your quit date by implementing a modest exercise plan and drinking more fluids.

Get support - Involve others in your quitting. Talk to your family and friends. You will want their support when withdrawal symptoms cause temptation. If you have a friend or family member that smokes, get them to quit with you.

Recognize your smoking triggers - These are learned behaviors that you associate with smoking. They usually cause you to automatically light a cigarette. If you light up right after dinner, try eating an apple or going for a walk. Try to avoid other triggers, like smoke-filled bars and breaks with colleagues who smoke, until you feel able to deal with them. Start to identify your triggers and develop alternatives to either the triggers or your learned response of lighting a cigarette.

Plan things to do - To help take your mind off smoking, it is good to keep busy. Try making a list of things you were planning to do, such as chores or hobbies. Exercise, take long walks or ride a bike. This will also help you relax and keep your body conditioned.

What happens when I quit smoking?

When you quit smoking, your body and brain begin to repair the damage; but because nicotine is addictive, you may feel worse for a while instead of better. Your body is dealing with nicotine withdrawal. Withdrawal symptoms can include irritability, anger, anxiety, trouble sleeping, depression and lack of energy. You may also be coughing more as your lungs try to clear themselves. The first few



Talk to your doctor or PharmaChoice pharmacist. They can discuss quitting techniques such as the patch, nicotine gum and medication if necessary. These will not work on their own but can help if combined with lifestyle changes and determination.