



Let's
Talk
About...

Relapse Prevention

Quitting smoking can be hard. The nicotine found in tobacco is highly addictive and changing behaviours can create a lot of mixed feelings, confusion and doubt about quitting. That's why it's important to plan ahead and think about how to prevent a relapse if and when it does occur.

A relapse is when someone who has quit starts smoking again or using tobacco on a regular basis (usually daily). Relapsing is common and usually happens during the first week after a person quits smoking. It means that there are things that led to the relapse. In addition, relapsing also provides a good opportunity to identify what things to avoid the next time you try to quit. Don't give up! Quitting is possible.

How to avoid a relapse

There are many ways to resist triggers and avoid a relapse. Here are some ideas:

- writing down triggers
- handling problems and negative feelings as they happen

- staying focused on quitting smoking
- celebrating small successes (going a day or week without smoking)

It is also important to seek help and support regularly from family, friends, health-care providers, hotlines and support groups in times of need. Avoiding a relapse can mean changing routines and finding enjoyable activities to do instead. Consider making a list of things that you enjoy doing.

How to manage cravings

Managing cravings and learning how to cope with them is a significant part of relapse prevention. There are several ways and things that you can do to reduce temptations to start smoking again, such as talking to someone, journalling, doing relaxation exercises and physically leaving the "tempting" situation entirely. You might also try to practise positive self-talk by thinking about the negative consequences of smoking, the reasons not to start smoking, and the fact that cravings and temptations are a common and normal part of the recovery journey.

Quitting is hard. We can help.
Call 1-866-710-QUIT (7848) or visit albertaquits.ca.