



**Let's
Talk
Tobacco**

A Guide to Help You Reduce and Stop Using Tobacco

Congratulations for taking this
first step towards a healthier you!



Tobacco Reduction
Program

1-866-710-QUIT (7848)
albertaquits.ca

It can be hard to stop using tobacco, but it's one of the most important things you can do to be healthier.

When you stop using tobacco, you'll notice health benefits right away. Within:

20 minutes	your blood pressure drops to normal
12 hours	the amount of oxygen in your blood goes up
24 hours	your chance of having a heart attack goes down
2 weeks to 3 months	your circulation improves and your lungs work up to 30% better
1 year	your risk of heart disease is cut in half
5 years	your risk of stroke goes down
10 years	your risk of lung cancer is cut in half
15 years	your risk of heart disease is the same as a non-smoker

What else do you have to look forward to? Think about the ways quitting tobacco will benefit you.

Write your ideas here.

Let's Look at How You Use Tobacco

Do you use tobacco without thinking? Before you reach for tobacco, ask yourself:

Do I really even want it right now?

Can I put it off for even a few minutes?

Is there something else I could or should be doing instead?

Be more aware of when you're most likely to use tobacco. Make note of:

the time of day

what you're doing

the situation(s)

who you're with

what kind of foods you're eating

if you're drinking alcohol

Keeping Track

Keeping track of when you use tobacco is an important step in making a change.

Cigarette or Chew # Situation	Time	Rate your Craving (1 = low / 5 = high)
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1.	_____	_____
2.	_____	_____
3.	_____	_____
4.	_____	_____
	_____	_____
	_____	_____
	_____	_____

Review your tracking log. Are there times you used that you really didn't have to? Can you try to stop those? What are some ways you can deal with the cravings and temptations?

Pay attention to when you use tobacco. You may not see yourself as a user if you:

- only use in social situations
- only use when you drink alcohol
- only use when you're with friends
- can go several days without using or craving it

However, you've likely formed strong routines and associations around using tobacco. Knowing what situations you find yourself using tobacco helps you build a plan for positive change.

By knowing your tobacco routines and associations, you can come up with some ways (strategies) to manage situations and times when you used tobacco. This is an important part of becoming mindful of when and how you use tobacco.



Instead of using tobacco when I feel:

I will try this instead:

Here are some tips to become more mindful of when you use tobacco:

- Use tobacco alone, not when you're doing anything else.
- Don't drink when you use tobacco. This includes coffee, tea and alcohol.
- Don't use tobacco while driving.
- Don't use tobacco while using technology, such as your tablet, phone, computer or e-reader.
- Use tobacco outside.

Why Change? Why Not?

If you're thinking about making a positive change, but aren't sure how to, use the worksheet below. Seeing the 'not so good' reasons for using may help you see there are a lot of great reasons not to use. This may help you decide if you're ready to get started.

You can skip this exercise if you've already decided to make a change.

The good things about using tobacco

Helps me feel relaxed

The not so good things about using tobacco

Have to go out in the cold to smoke

The not so good things about stopping

Have to avoid my friends who smoke

The good things about stopping

Save money!

Think about what you wrote down. How can you use it to keep you motivated to make changes?

How can you replace the good things about using tobacco with healthier choices?

What about nicotine?

Nicotine is a very addictive drug. All tobacco and tobacco-like products, including traditional and organic tobacco, as well as some herbal products and e-cigarettes, have nicotine in them.

Nicotine works fast, sending a sense of pleasure to the brain within seconds. However, because this sense of pleasure doesn't last long, you need to use tobacco again to get that feeling back or to keep it. The first few days of being tobacco-free can be tough!

As the level of nicotine in your body goes down, your body may have recovery (withdrawal) symptoms. These can be uncomfortable—enough to make you start thinking about using tobacco. These symptoms can start as early as 30 minutes after your last cigarette or chew. The longest symptoms last about 4 weeks.

It's important to have a plan (strategies) ready to help you manage these recovery symptoms before your quit date

There are safety concerns around e-cigarettes.

Because chemicals in the cartridges can vary, it's hard to know what e-cigarette users and people nearby are breathing in. Tests show they can have toxic chemicals in them that can irritate the lungs and/or make asthma worse.

At this time, Health Canada warns Canadians not to buy or use these products. Alberta Health Services supports Health Canada's position and warnings.



One strategy is the 4 D's.

1. **Delay:** Resist the urge to use tobacco. The strongest urges only last for about 3 minutes. These may feel like very long 3 minutes! You might want to time a few cravings to see how long yours last.
2. **Deep breathe:** Breathing deeply 'tricks' the body into thinking you're inhaling. Instead, you're filling your lungs with oxygen.
3. **Drink:** Drinking lots of water helps flush the chemicals from your body. For now, it's best to cut back or stop using drinks that are high in caffeine (coffee, tea, cola) and cut back the amount of alcohol you drink.
4. **Do:** Do something to take your mind off the urge. Make a list ahead of time of the things you can do instead.

Other strategies:

- Make a list of reasons why you want to quit and keep it handy.
- Remind yourself about the benefits of quitting.
- Call a friend.
- Meditate.
- Go for a walk. Studies show that breaking a sweat can reduce cravings. Besides, it's good for you.

Remember—recovery symptoms don't last long and are a sign that your body's healing.

Becoming Tobacco-Free

Becoming tobacco-free is a journey. Here are some tips to keep you motivated along the way.

One Day at a Time

- It'll get easier. Each day without tobacco makes you healthier.
- Reward yourself by treating yourself every day.
- Remind yourself throughout the day that you've come this far and are still moving forward.
- Remember your list of reasons for making these positive changes. Read the list every day to remind yourself what your reasons are and to keep you motivated.

Physical Activity

Being active is one of the most important things you can do as you become tobacco-free. You might not think so at the beginning, but walking or jogging for 30 minutes, 3 times a week can be fun, and it's free! The more active you are, the better your chances of staying on track.

Other benefits of being active are that it:

- decreases stress
- helps you stay relaxed and positive
- helps manage cravings and recovery symptoms
- improves your overall health
- helps you reach or stay at a healthy weight

Healthy Eating

Many people worry about gaining weight when they try to quit. Here are some tips to stay healthy and eat right:

- Eat healthy, balanced meals at regular times.
- Eat unprocessed, whole foods and snacks that are low in salt and sugar and higher in fibre.
- Drink water (try for 8 glasses a day).
- Limit your alcohol and caffeine.
- Learn to recognize why you're eating—are you really hungry or is it emotional eating (e.g., bored, stressed or angry).
- Know your portion sizes and stick to them.

Sleep

Some people's sleep patterns change while they're trying to quit. Some people sleep more, some less, some have trouble falling or staying asleep. Other people have no change in their sleep pattern.



Here are some ideas that can help your sleep:

- Go to bed and get up at about the same time every day, including days you don't work.
- Have a relaxing bedtime ritual.
- Keep the bedroom quiet, cool and dark.
- Exercise during the day, not close to bedtime.
- Don't drink caffeine products or alcohol close to bedtime.
- Don't use electronics in your bedroom (e.g., TV, e-readers, iPads).
- If you can't sleep, go into another room and do something relaxing until you feel tired.

If you're still having trouble sleeping, speak with your doctor.

Save the money that you would have spent on tobacco and use it to reward yourself with something nice or by paying off some debt.

Some things to keep in mind

People who use tobacco may believe what they want to believe, not what studies tell them.

Some examples of this are:

- **Belief:** *Smoking's not that bad for you.* Everyone's heard of someone who smoked and lived to be 90. There's always going to be that someone who defies the odds.

Fact: People who smoke die an average of 10 years sooner than people who don't smoke. How many people who smoke didn't make it to 90? A lot more than the 1 who did!

- **Belief:** *It's impossible to quit.*

Fact: *Relapse is part of the process of quitting.* Few people can quit on the first 'quit attempt'. We know from studies that people do learn from a relapse. This increases their chances of succeeding on the next 'quit attempt'. The main thing is to keep trying.

- **Belief:** *Using tobacco relaxes you.*

Fact: *Tobacco only seems to relax you.* This is because the nicotine takes away the uncomfortable craving. As well, nicotine gives you a quick 'hit' from the brain-reward chemical dopamine.

The reality is that tobacco and nicotine cause both psychological and physiological stress. Tobacco causes cravings and your heart rate and blood pressure to spike, which makes your heart work harder.

You can do this!

Now that you understand more about how and why you use tobacco and what your journey may be like, it's time to put your change plan to work.

Plan for Support

Make a list of who you think will support you through your quit journey. Ask them for their support and understanding.

For more support:

- check out group cessation or healthy living programs in your area
- call the AlbertaQuits helpline at 1-866-710-QUIT (7848), or visit them at albertaquits.ca
- talk to your healthcare provider or pharmacist about support such as:
 - nicotine replacement therapy (NRT)
 - prescription medicine (non-nicotine)
 - combination therapy (NRT and prescription medicine)
 - counselling

Set a Date

- Pick a date and tell your support group.
- Choose a date that will work for you. It could be when you'll be busy and won't have time to think about it, or a day where you'll be relaxed and less stressed.
- Some 'stop' prescription medicine has to be started before your quit date to give it time to start working. Others (like NRT) start working right away so you can start them before or on your quit date. Starting NRT before your quit date can help you cut down by the time your quit date is here.

My Change Plan

Working towards my quit day of _____

Now that you've picked your quit day, here are some things to think about ahead of time as part of your quit plan.

My reasons for quitting:

My routines (things that create a strong urge for me to use tobacco):

Ways I can deal with each craving or urge (change support techniques):

My rewards for not using tobacco:

For each hour:

For each day:

For each week:

After that:

My support people are

_____ and _____

They will support me by:

The good things about being tobacco-free are:

Sometimes you just have to keep trying!

Using tobacco after your tobacco-free date is like a rough spot on the road to your journey to success. Just like any trip you take, if you hit a bump or a detour, it doesn't mean that you failed or that you should give up and go home. It means you need to look at your plan again and adjust it.

A slip often happens when your plan for change or managing a tough situation wasn't followed through or just didn't work. This doesn't mean you have to start over.

- Look at your slip—what do you think caused it?
- Take another look at your plan—does something need to be adjusted? Sometimes it takes more than 1 strategy to manage a tough situation.
- Remind yourself why you're making a healthy lifestyle change.
- Focus on the positives of what you've done so far and encourage yourself to keep up the good work.
- If you're on NRT or prescription medicine—do you think it needs to be adjusted? Speak with your healthcare provider.

It usually takes a few tries before people stop using tobacco for good. Learn from each attempt you make. Adjust your action plan, whether it's trying something new (e.g., medicine) or adjusting your plan to manage those rough patches. It might mean staying away from some situations until you're sure you can manage them.

Get support. Don't give up!

you
can
do it

Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT) and Prescription Medicine

NRT and prescription medicine can relieve nicotine cravings and recovery symptoms. Not only that, but it can double or even triple your chances of quitting for good!

Not everyone needs medicine to help them quit using tobacco. To help you decide what to choose, look at how:

- much tobacco you use
- addicted your body is to nicotine
- many times you've tried to stop

Your healthcare provider or pharmacist can help you decide about NRT or prescription medicine support.

NRT is non-prescription medicine that has nicotine in it. It includes nicotine patches, gum, lozenges, mouth spray and inhalers. NRT helps reduce nicotine recovery symptoms and cravings by gradually reducing the amount of nicotine you take in. While NRT helps people quit, it isn't for everyone.

There is prescription medicine that helps manage recovery symptoms and the cravings. Your healthcare provider will work with you to find the best one for you.

On Your Way!

Going without tobacco can be hard, but you can do it. Keep this booklet handy so you can go back to it when you need to.

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