



Canadian Cancer Society  
Société canadienne du cancer

for smokers who  
don't want to quit



ONE  
STEP  
AT A  
TIME

Let's Make Cancer History

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## One Step at a Time print materials

### 1 For Smokers Who Don't Want to Quit (booklet)

Stage 1

### 2 For Smokers Who Want to Quit (booklet)

Stage 2

Stage 3

Stage 4

Stage 5

### 3 If You Want to Help a Smoker Quit (pamphlet)

#### Acknowledgments:

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## Introduction: What is *One Step at a Time* about?

Smokers, their friends and family are all individuals. Your needs are unique. The *One Step at a Time* program is for smokers and for the people who care about them.

I am a smoker. I like to smoke. It helps me relax. Takes the stress away, and helps me think straight. It's part of my daily routine. Truth is, I am addicted to smoking – have been for years, but what the heck, lots of people are. It used to be, you could smoke anywhere. Not any more. I feel like I have to sneak around any time I want to have a cigarette! My family and friends are always trying to “help” me – always for my own good. Please! I can hear them now: “It's so bad for you. Why can't you just quit – it can't be that hard. If you loved me, you'd quit. You could do it if you really wanted to.” Well, I don't really want to quit. I don't even remotely want to quit. Everyone else wants me to quit. I enjoy it too much. And besides, I can't imagine myself not smoking. I think that I'm so convinced it would be too hard to do, that I give up before I even try. And at times it feels like the more other people try to “help” me, the more I want to escape – and have a smoke.

**If you smoke and don't think much about quitting, unless you're being “helped” or lectured to by someone – relax. This booklet is for you. It's here to offer you support, not to try and convert you, magically, to a life without cigarettes. This booklet is for people who do not want to quit smoking.**

## Why should I read this booklet?

This booklet is not about trying to trick you or make you quit smoking. It's about giving you information and support without any strings attached. No lectures, no pressure, no judgment – just a friendly voice to let you know that you're not alone. You're not a bad person for smoking, and you don't have to quit if you don't want to. In fact, you would have a hard time quitting if you didn't want to.

You may not intend to quit. You may not have thought about the effect of cigarettes on yourself and your family. You may not believe that quitting is possible. That's okay. The Canadian Cancer Society wants to help people quit smoking, but we also recognize that you have a right to make your own choices. This guide does not tell you to quit. It only asks you to consider why you smoke.

This booklet offers you some things to think about, and provides practical tips that may relieve some of your stress connected to smoking. It can help you:

- deal with people who nag you to quit
- understand your smoking habit
- get some new facts about quitting
- understand how your smoking affects the people around you

## Why would the Canadian Cancer Society produce a booklet for people who don't want to quit?

The Canadian Cancer Society does not support smoking. We contribute to cancer prevention and support people who have cancer. Smoking is closely connected to cancers, so part of what we do is help people quit. You may not want to quit today or have any plans to quit in the future. That's okay, but we wouldn't be doing our job if we missed the chance to share some information that may get you thinking about quitting someday. That is our goal – to give you something to think about.

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# You and the people who want you to quit

I don't like being told what to do. As a smoker, I'm being told what I can and can't do all the time by people I don't even know. I am an adult. I have the right to make choices about what I do and don't want to do. I don't smoke because I think it's good for me.

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 nagged. There may also be people who haven't actually come out and said anything, but you still feel they're passing judgment on your smoking.

Even though it may feel unfair, no smoking policies are here to stay. There are fewer and fewer places where you are allowed to smoke. It can be annoying to be told where you can and can't smoke. It is even worse to be hassled about quitting. No wonder some smokers get angry or defensive.

## A new point of view

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. In fact, the pressure they put on you may prevent you from thinking it through and, perhaps, making your own decision to quit eventually.

It may be hard for you to talk to someone if you feel they're judging you and don't understand your perspective. Explain to them how you feel; they may start acting differently.

If you think about how and why you react when you're pressured or lectured, and share that with someone, they may start to feel and act differently.

My sister used to be on my case about smoking all of the time. She was driving me nuts. She kept talking about how much she cared about me and my health. Sometimes I would fight with her and sometimes I would just ignore her. Each time I got angrier and more reluctant to listen to anything she tried to say.

One day I was trying to explain to her that her pushing was not helping me. I reminded her of something that happened one summer when we were kids. She tried to push me into a pool one day, thinking that it would help me overcome my fear of water. Wrong. I explained to her that when she pushed me into the water, all I wanted to do was get out as fast as I could. It took a long time before I wanted to go near the water again. I decided to learn to swim only when I was ready. I enjoy swimming now, but I came close to never trying it again because of that push.

She got the point and stopped nagging me.

Things can look and feel a lot different if you both try to understand one another. You may be frustrated, angry and not care where they're coming from, just that they stop bugging you. That's understandable, but chances are if they care about you – you care about them too. Hold that thought.

Let them know that you understand their feelings about your smoking. Thank them for their concern about your health, and remind them that only you can decide to quit.

Explain that the more they bug you about it, the more upset you'll get. Suggest that if they would "ease off," you'd be less defensive, and you might actually think about quitting some day – when you're ready.

### It's about the smoke, not you as a person

Smoking restrictions are designed to make places safe for everyone who uses them. If it seems like people don't care about your right to smoke, consider these 3 things:

- You have the right to smoke in appropriate places.
- Others have the right to worry about both your health and theirs.
- People have the right to make their community a safer and healthier place.

When your rights and their rights don't match, it may be easier just to respect each other than to get angry. Getting into an argument won't change much.

## You and smoking

### Why do I smoke?

You are a smart, sensible person. You do certain things because you choose to do them. Your choices are good ones, but at the same time you know smoking is bad for you. Why do you choose to smoke? Some answers are found on the next few pages. As you read them, think about your own answers.

### Smoking helps me relax

Each time I light up a cigarette, it lets me put a wall between me and the things in my life that are stressing me out – kind of like my own personal smoke screen. The thought of dealing with some of those stresses without smoking is enough to make me want to have another smoke.

Many smokers truly believe that smoking relaxes them. In fact, smoking makes your heart beat faster, your breathing quicker and raises your blood pressure.

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

- The cigarette stops the intense craving caused by nicotine addiction.
- Stopping for a smoke gives you a break from work.
- Having a cigarette takes your mind off your worries.
- You like to smoke, so it seems calming.

Even though you may feel relaxed for a few moments, over time the level of stress in your body actually increases.

### I'd gain weight if I quit smoking

The fear of putting on weight was the biggest block that kept me from quitting for years. Then, one of my friends at work quit smoking. We started talking about why she didn't gain weight. She shared some tips with me on how I could keep my weight down if I quit. I figured it was worth a try. That was 2 months ago. Now, I bring snacks to work, go for walks after lunch, and I'm even checking out the local pool to get in a few swims each month. Getting into a new routine helped me stick to it – and I haven't gained any weight. I feel great.

**Many people worry that they will gain weight if they quit. Some people gain 5 to 10 pounds when they stop smoking. Of course, some people also gain weight while they smoke.**

**The health benefits of quitting are far greater than those associated with putting on a few extra pounds.**

## Smoking gives me a pick-me-up when I'm feeling down

I'm a single, working mother. I have 3 kids, a dog and rent to pay. I work long hours, and there are a number of times in the day when I need something just to help me stay on track. When I have a smoke, it makes me feel good. It's like I light up a cigarette and my worries go on hold. It is almost like a reward. My sister is totally addicted to chocolate. She says it gives her a high and makes her feel good. She rewards herself with chocolate every day. I like chocolate too, but prefer a smoke, and why not? It's one of the only things I do for myself these days – and it's not fattening.

It's true that smoking can give you a temporary high. However, over the long term, it will do more harm than good. Eventually your body begins to adjust to the temporary highs by reducing your normal energy level.

## If I quit, people will think I'm giving in to those "smoke-free" campaigns

There are lots of messages telling you to quit smoking. In fact, there are so many that you may feel like smoking more. If you're not ready to give up smoking right now, that's understandable. It's your choice whether to smoke or to stop.

## I'm not hurting anyone but myself – it's my choice to smoke or quit

If you kept track of all the dangers of smoking, the size of your list might surprise you. Sure, it's your choice whether or not to smoke, but here are some facts.

### Facts about chemicals

Tobacco smoke contains nicotine and over 4000 other chemicals. At least 40 of them are highly poisonous and cause cancer. A few are so strong that any amount is considered dangerous. Even 1 or 2 cigarettes can be harmful. However, it is also true that the more you smoke, the more you place your health at risk. The nicotine in tobacco is what makes it addictive.

Most smokers inhale about 1 milligram (mg) of nicotine with each cigarette. A daily dose of 5 mg is enough to addict most people. With every puff of smoke, you dump more nicotine and cancer-causing, toxic chemicals into your body and into the air around you.

Many of the chemicals in cigarette smoke are also found in hazardous industrial waste! These include:

- vinyl chloride
- acetone (paint stripper)
- arsenic (a poison)
- hydrogen cyanide (poison used in gas chambers)
- ammonia (bleach)
- radionuclides
- naphthalene (moth balls)
- pesticides (insect killers)
- lead
- carbon monoxide (car exhaust)

## Facts about second-hand smoke

Today everyone knows that second-hand smoke is dangerous. Second-hand smoke is highly concentrated with chemicals from the end of burning cigarettes. The smoke you exhale is also quite dangerous, but do you know just how dangerous it is?

Kids breathe faster and weigh less than adults, so the effects of second-hand smoke are much worse for them than for adults. They have many more health problems than kids who don't breathe second-hand smoke. They are more likely to have:

- more hospitalizations in the first year of life
- more severe allergies
- breathing problems like asthma, bronchitis and pneumonia
- chronic ear infections
- red, itchy, watery eyes
- headaches
- hyperactive behaviour
- problems in reading and math skills
- a poor attention span
- poor school attendance

They are also more likely to develop serious problems with their heart and lungs when they grow up.

Adults who breathe second-hand smoke have a higher risk of heart attack, stroke, cancer and lung diseases such as emphysema, asthma or bronchitis.

It's hard to believe that something you enjoy so much can actually hurt others, but the fact is second-hand smoke is dangerous. It can spread from room to room, sometimes invisibly. Although you may not want to quit smoking, you may choose not to smoke in homes or cars when others, especially children, are present. A growing number of smokers are choosing to protect others by not smoking around them.

## Health concerns for women

A particular concern for women who smoke is that smoking can increase menstrual problems and cause an early start to menopause. There are also special health concerns related to pregnancy, birth and babies, which are listed on the next page.

## Health concerns for men

You may be surprised to know that smoking can affect your sexual health. For example, men who smoke may have less healthy sperm. They may also have weaker erections. Smoking contributes to the buildup of fatty deposits in arteries and veins. This damage can reduce blood flow to the penis. The buildup of nicotine in the penile tissue may also make it difficult to maintain an erection. The bottom line is that smoking can lead to sexual impotence.

Some of you may think, "I haven't had any problems so far!" Guess what? The damage caused by smoking builds up over time. For example, if a man smokes heavily during his teens and twenties, he risks developing erectile dysfunction in his thirties and forties. Stopping smoking will help prevent this damage.

Research also shows that the smell of a smoker can be a real “turn-off” to both sexes.

## Bringing a baby into the life of a smoker

### Mother-to-be

As a woman who smokes, you may have a harder time getting pregnant. You may also have more problems while you are pregnant.

Smoking during pregnancy may lead to having:

- a miscarriage (losing the baby before the baby is due)
- a premature baby
- a harder labour and delivery

A mother who smokes after the baby is born may have less breast milk. She will also pass on nicotine and other chemicals to the baby through her breast milk.

### Father-to-be

Most people know that a woman shouldn't smoke while she's pregnant, but did you know that your second-hand smoke may lead to problems with your partner's pregnancy? If a woman breathes second-hand smoke while she's pregnant:

- she is more likely to have a premature baby or miscarry (lose the baby before it is due)
- she may have a harder labour and delivery

After the baby is born, a woman who lives with a smoker may have less breast milk and will pass on nicotine and chemicals through her breast milk.

## Baby

A baby born to a parent who smokes is more likely to:

- have a lower than healthy birth weight
- be cranky, restless and spit up more often
- get pneumonia or have other serious lung problems

Also, some studies show that a baby who breathes second-hand smoke may be more likely to die of SIDS (sudden infant death syndrome).

## You and quitting

I'm always being asked when I am going to quit. You know what? I have my own reasons for not quitting right now. Just leave me alone.

### I don't feel like quitting right now

Lots of people aren't ready to give up their smoking habit. It's just not the right time to quit. However, you never know when the right moment will be, and in the meantime, it never hurts to keep an open mind.

### I am too addicted to quit smoking

It's true that nicotine is a highly addictive substance, but there are ways to break the addiction. You can learn simple ways to help overcome your nicotine cravings. There are also a number of medical treatments called nicotine replacement therapies, such as the patch, nicotine gum, inhalers and lozenges. There are also other drugs that may help. Some of these products are available without a prescription.

Besides the physical addiction to nicotine, the actual act of smoking is a powerful habit. It can be hard to give up a smoke with your coffee, after eating, or when you are on the phone.

### I'll quit when I get pregnant

Most women 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 is hard to do – and being pregnant doesn't make it any easier.

You may have no reason to quit smoking right now. That's fine, but if you ever think of getting pregnant, you may want to keep the next facts in mind because it may be easier to quit now rather than later.

### I've smoked for years – why should I quit?

Many smokers feel physically fit and healthy. That's great, but there is a great deal of research to show that smoking causes health problems that may not show up for years. For example, smoking causes cancer, lung disease, heart disease, poor blood flow and ulcers. Smokers also have more colds than non-smokers. It doesn't matter whether you smoke a little or a lot; you can still develop health problems.

We know that it's your decision to smoke, but it's important for you to make an informed choice. You know the benefits you get from smoking. Knowing some of the benefits you can get from quitting will help you make a decision that's right for you.

Quitting smoking can make a big difference. While some of the benefits will take time, others start almost right away. For example:

#### **After 1 day**

Your lungs are working better and you don't feel quite so out of breath. You can climb the stairs more easily.

**After 2 days**

Your senses of taste and smell are returning. You'll be coughing more as your lungs get rid of mucus.

**After a week**

The blood flow to your hands and feet will improve and you won't feel as cold.

**Within half a year**

You will notice less coughing, sinus congestion and shortness of breath.

**After 1 year**

Your risk of dying from a heart attack is cut in half.

Even people who have already developed smoking-related illnesses can benefit from quitting. Among smokers who have had a heart attack, quitting smoking reduces the chance of a second heart attack by 50%, compared to those who continue to smoke.

**There are also many other great things about quitting:**

- You will feel in control.
- Your breath, clothes and home won't smell.
- You will breathe more easily.
- Your children will be healthier.
- You will be more rested, relaxed and energetic.
- You will set a good example for your children and friends.
- You will have more money.

In addition to experiencing the other benefits, women who stop smoking before pregnancy or early in their pregnancy, can reduce their risk of having either a miscarriage or an unhealthy baby. Those who stay smoke-free see a reduction in problems with breastfeeding and an improvement in

the health of their infants. Staying smoke-free can also help after your baby is born, by helping reduce your stress and improve your sleep.

If you feel healthy now and you want to stay healthy, quitting smoking may help.

Quitting smoking is a gradual process for many people. There are 5 different stages that you go through related to quitting smoking.

**Not thinking about quitting (Stage 1)**

This is the stage you are likely in. This booklet is designed to help people in this stage.

**Thinking about quitting (Stage 2)**

To quit or not to quit? You identify concerns you have about quitting and learn ways to overcome them.

**Preparing to quit (Stage 3)**

You prepare to quit smoking. For instance, you cut back or switch to a brand that you don't like.

**Quitting (Stage 4)**

You actually quit. You may need to deal with some of the physical symptoms of quitting.

**Staying smoke-free for good (Stage 5)**

You build the skills and confidence you need to stay smoke-free for good.

Stages 2 to 5 are covered in the booklet *For Smokers Who Want to Quit*.

## Summary of stages and booklets

Stage	Booklet
Not thinking about quitting (Stage 1)	<i>For Smokers Who Don't Want to Quit</i>
Thinking about quitting (Stage 2)	<i>For Smokers Who Want to Quit</i>
Preparing to quit (Stage 3)	
Quitting (Stage 4)	
Staying smoke-free for good (Stage 5)	

## Looking ahead

When you started reading this booklet, you weren't thinking of quitting. Perhaps now, you could at least imagine quitting in the future. In any case, you may want to think about these things:

- How do I feel about smoking?
- How does my smoking affect me and others?
- How do I feel about others wanting me to quit?
- Do I want to quit smoking?
- What help is available if I choose to quit?

One day – maybe even today – you could be a smoker who is thinking about quitting. As time goes by, you may even decide to try to quit.

The booklet *For Smokers Who Want to Quit* is full of practical information for people who are thinking of quitting and are looking for help on how to do it successfully and as easily as possible.

There are 5 stages in the *One Step at a Time* program. This book covers Stage 1. The other stages are covered by *For Smokers Who Want to Quit*. Call a smokers' helpline for a copy by using the numbers on the back of this book.

## 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**, e-mail us at **info@cis.cancer.ca** or visit our website at **www.cancer.ca**.

Smokers' helplines are now available across Canada with trained quit specialists available for free, confidential help over the telephone. Please call the toll-free number for your area printed on the back of this book.

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Call a smokers' helpline at one of these provincial toll-free numbers:

**British Columbia**

**1 877 455-2233**

**Alberta**

**1 866 332-2322**

**Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, New Brunswick,  
Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island**

**1 877 513-5333**

**Quebec**

**1 866 527-7383**

**Newfoundland and Labrador**

**1 800 363-5864**



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