

HOW TO HELP SOMEONE QUIT SMOKING

SMART STEPS

to help make
it easier



quitnow.ca



BC LUNG
FOUNDATION



Ready to Help Someone Quit?

Kudos on wanting to support someone in your life quit smoking or vaping. Friends, family, colleagues and significant others can play a crucial role in helping someone quit - because people who feel supported are much more likely to quit smoking or vaping for the long haul.

This booklet provides useful information on:

- Why quitting can be difficult
- What you can do to make it easier
- Strategies to deal with cravings
- Navigating risky situations
- De-stressing 101
- Helping someone through a slip or relapse
- Effective quitting tools and services



Understanding Why Quitting

is Hard

Smoking and vaping can result in powerful addictions. After someone inhales from a cigarette or vape, the nicotine reaches their brain in less than 7 seconds and provides a temporary feeling of pleasure.

When someone quits, the body is deprived of nicotine, and the person can experience uncomfortable withdrawal symptoms and cravings. Plus, smoking

or vaping is usually an integral part of a person's daily routine, and common feelings, activities, and situations can trigger the urge to smoke or vape.

Many people come to believe they can't handle everyday situations or stress without smoking or vaping, but your support can really make a difference. And the more you understand about quitting, the more you can help.

Making it Easier for your Loved One

The evidence shows that taking a supportive approach to helping someone quit is more effective than a hard line approach that includes nagging or judging. It will only stress them out, and could push them right back to smoking or vaping.

Slips and relapses happen, and people rarely quit on their first try. Here are some tips for making it easier for your loved one.

Be Supportive

Offering support means being there for them without an agenda. Quitting is different for everyone, so don't assume you know what they are going through or what they should do to quit. Ask them what they need from you and be available to listen or help deal with cravings.

"I know you are having a tough time right now. Is there anything I can do to make things a bit easier for you?"



Tip: Avoid lecturing, nagging or shaming. If they feel judged by you, it will only make them feel worse and they may not come to you for help when they really need it.

Be Encouraging

Try to keep them focused on the positive aspects of quitting, like the money they'll be saving and their improved health. Being positive and boosting their confidence can motivate them to stay on track. Be their cheerleader!

Tip: Remind them of how well they are doing and praise them often. Be specific with your praises, and use positive words.

Be Patient

Supporting someone in their quit can be frustrating at times. Withdrawal can be difficult and the person quitting can experience mood swings and irritability for a number of weeks. Plus, there may be slips along the way. Try to be patient.

Don't give up on them or let them lose confidence in their ability to quit. Your unconditional support is important!



"My friend was so understanding, even when I was grumpy! She never gave up on me."
–Karen Z., Richmond, BC

Tip: Be prepared for bad moods and don't take it personally. Irritability and crankiness are common symptoms of nicotine withdrawal. Bear with them, it will pass.

Celebrate Success

Celebrating small successes along the way helps to keep people motivated. Quitting is a BIG DEAL! Have some fun together and participate in non-smoking activities.

Here are some celebratory ideas:

- Buy some flowers – to celebrate their improved sense of smell
- Plan a trip together – a day getaway or a weekend
- Buy some tickets to a concert, show or sports event
- Offer to make dinner – to celebrate their improved sense of taste
- Join a new activity you can do together, like yoga or rowing

Tip: Help your loved one celebrate by planning a few fun activities to reward milestones along the way – like the first day, first week and first month. These are important hurdles and should be acknowledged!



"I know this is hard on you, but I'm so proud that you are sticking it out. I want to help you celebrate your success by doing something fun."

Support Them in Managing

Withdrawal



Physical withdrawal from nicotine usually only lasts a couple of weeks, but the symptoms can be uncomfortable. The body has to adjust to being without nicotine and the cravings can be very strong during this time. Many people slip up in the first week after quitting, so it helps to be prepared and know what to expect so you can help them get through this period.

Common withdrawal symptoms:

- Feeling depressed or sad
- Trouble sleeping
- Feeling cranky, frustrated or angry
- Feeling anxious, nervous or restless
- Difficulty concentrating
- Increased appetite
- Coughing and dry mouth
- Headaches and feeling dizzy
- Upset stomach and constipation

Tip: The good news is that using nicotine replacement products like the patch and gum can greatly reduce the intensity of withdrawal and double their chances of quitting for good.

Support Them in Coping With

Cravings

Smoking and vaping are about more than a physical addiction to nicotine. People who smoke or vape can develop powerful psychological and emotional attachments to cigarettes – and associate smoking or vaping with certain situations, people, places and feelings.

“Hey, I know you’re having a craving right now, but let’s go for a quick five minute walk and it’ll pass.”

Without thinking, daily habits, routines, and activities can trigger the urge to smoke or vape. While physical withdrawal is only temporary, your loved one can experience cravings to smoke for months after they quit. So it’s important to help them

make a plan for how to handle cravings.

Quick distractions when the urges hit:

- Take deep breaths
- Eat some carrots, nuts, or celery
- Squeeze a stress ball
- Go for a walk or a run
- Play a game on your phone
- Brush your teeth
- Chew a toothpick, cinnamon stick or gum
- Drink a cold glass of water

Tip: Cravings typically last about five minutes, so help your loved one ride it out by finding ways to distract them until the craving passes.

Navigate Risky Situations

Alcohol – Alcohol is associated with smoking, and for many, it's a strong trigger to smoke. Alcohol can weaken a person's ability to say no, break down inhibitions and is the primary reason that many people slip up. For best results, suggest they avoid alcohol or help them set a limit and stick to it.

Parties and social situations – These can be difficult times for people trying to quit, and can be stressful and filled with the urge to smoke or vape.

Tip: Drinking through a straw can break up the routine and slow down the amount you drink. Or, have glasses of water in between drinks, or try sparkling water to limit the amount.

Tip: Suggest they keep their hands and mouth busy by chewing gum, playing with a toothpick, or holding a glass of water.

Suggest to your loved one to pick a 'quit buddy' who will provide support and keep them from smoking or vaping if the urge arises, or offer to go with them as their quit buddy.

Other people smoking – Being around others smoking/vaping in social situations or at work can be very difficult. Help your loved one avoid people who are smoking or vaping and to come up with coping strategies for dealing with those situations.

De-Stress 101

Many people use smoking or vaping as a way to deal with stressful situations in their lives. Experiencing stress while quitting can trigger a strong craving. While stress is a natural part of life, and can never be avoided entirely, you can help your loved one break this cycle by finding healthier ways to deal with stress. Since stress is a major cause of slip-ups, if you notice they are stressed, here are some suggestions to help:

Common stress relievers:

- Practice deep breathing exercises
- Go for a walk
- Take a nap
- Talk it out with a friend
- Listen to music
- Try yoga or a spin class
- Go to a comedy club or watch a funny TV show
- Do a crossword puzzle
- Take a bath or long hot shower
- Read a book
- Eat a healthy diet including fresh veggies and fruit



Be Alert to Depression

For some, smoking or vaping is a form of self-medication to help deal with feelings of loneliness, sadness and depression. When someone quits, they can feel like they are removing a major crutch for coping through the day, and it's not uncommon to experience feelings of sadness or depression. In most cases, this should pass within a few weeks.

Check in with your loved one and ask how they are feeling. Sometimes just talking with a friend can help, but if the feelings of sadness, anxiety or depression continue, have them talk to their health care provider. This is especially important if they have suffered depression in the past.

Tip: People who are being treated for depression and want to quit should talk to their health care provider, as they may need an adjustment of their medications.

"You seem more down than usual so I just wanted to check how you are doing? Can I do anything to help or maybe just come over and talk?"



Stay Positive During "Slips"

Slips and relapses happen, and people rarely quit on their first try. In order to get back on track, they need to feel supported and encouraged. If your loved one has a slip or starts smoking or vaping again, don't be too hard on them. They will likely feel guilty enough, so remind them that a slip is part of the quit process and is just one bump in the road.

If they slip:

- Ask them what they think triggered the craving that led to the slip
- Help them learn from the experience by developing a plan to do something different next time
- Remind them of their reasons for quitting in the first place

- Suggest extra support from www.quitnow.ca or the use of nicotine replacement aids like nicotine patches and gum to help reduce the cravings



Tip: Help your loved one heed the warning signs - that inner voice just before a slip telling them it's ok to have "just one". Help them stop those thoughts in their tracks and do something different, like drink some water or go for a walk.

Fact: Every quit attempt is a step in the right direction. The more times they try, the more likely they will succeed. Criticism, on the other hand, is counterproductive: it just makes them fearful of being judged and less likely to try again.



“No problem. This is just a little setback. I know you can do this. I’m still here to help you along the way.”



Effective Quitting

Tools & Services

Let them know where they can find help and support to quit. Refer them to QuitNow for FREE support

Coaching: For information and help with quitting call a Quit Coach at 1.877.455.2233 or Live Chat www.quitnow.ca/chat

Text Program: To receive support via text message, register for our free 3 month mobile messaging service that offers tips, information and support to help you on your quit journey. www.quitnow.ca/texttips

Community Support: To access our online community, visit the Community Forum at www.quitnow.ca/forum

Local Help Directory: a listing of other supports like pharmacists in the communities across BC who are trained to help smokers quit. www.quitnow.ca/support/local-help

Medication Options for Support

Access Free Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT) or subsidized medications

The BC government offers a 3-month supply of nicotine replacement therapy (gum, patch, or lozenge) or quit smoking prescription medication (varenicline or bupropion) through the BC Smoking Cessation Program to those who qualify.

For Nicotine Replacement Therapy, visit your local pharmacy to order.

For prescription quit medication, talk to your physician.

Visit www.quitnow.ca/quitting/preparing-quit/get-subsidized-medication to learn more about eligibility and accessing quit aids.



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