

How do I stop smoking?

- ✔ Visit your doctor to help you make a plan that works for you.
- ✔ Try nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) or a stop smoking medication and use it correctly. (NRT includes nicotine patch, gum, lozenge, inhaler and mouth spray. You do not need a prescription.)
- ✔ Try behavioural counselling. Studies show that using NRT and behavioural counselling together improves your chance of stopping smoking.
- ✔ When you stop smoking, ask your pharmacist to review your medications. Your health care team may need to adjust some of your medications.

Where can I get more help?

- ✔ Register with the **BC Smoking Cessation Program** to get FREE NRT. (See back page.)
- ✔ Contact **VGH Smoking Cessation Clinic*** (cessationclinic@vch.ca) for FREE behavioural counselling and education by phone or video. Available to BC residents.
- ✔ Use **QuitNow*** for FREE behavioural counselling by phone (1-877-455-2233), text and online support (quitnow.ca). [Group support sessions](#) also available.
- ✔ Use **Talk Tobacco*** for FREE Indigenous quit smoking support at talktobacco.ca or by phone 1-833-998-8255.

*also provides support for stopping vaping

BC Smoking Cessation Program

This program provides **FREE nicotine replacement therapy (NRT)** for stopping smoking or use of other tobacco products. Visit gov.bc.ca/bcsmokingcessation.

> Who can use this program?

All BC residents who have a BC Services Card (or CareCard).

> What does the program cover?

Option 1: Nicotine replacement therapy

Every calendar year, it covers up to 12 continuous weeks of one type of NRT: nicotine gum, lozenge or patch.

- To get NRT, visit your local pharmacist. You do not need a prescription.

Option 2: Stop smoking medications

Depending on your PharmaCare coverage, you may be able to get partial or full coverage for stop smoking medications: **Bupropion (Zyban®)** or **Varenicline (generics)**.

- Ask your doctor about stop smoking medications. You need a prescription.
- Phone PharmaCare to ask about coverage for medications.

Contact PharmaCare

Lower Mainland: 604-683-7151

Rest of BC (toll-free): 1-800-663-7100




Do you want to get better **faster** from surgery?

Stop smoking today.



Why is stopping smoking before surgery important?



When you smoke or breathe in second-hand smoke, you are breathing in more than 7,000 toxic chemicals. About 70 of them cause cancer.

Stopping smoking or smoking fewer cigarettes can make surgery safer and help you get better faster.

Try not to smoke for **at least 4 weeks** before surgery.

The sooner you stop, the better. Every minute you are not smoking can make a difference.

How does stopping smoking before surgery help?

- ✓ Your immune system will work better. Your risk of getting a wound infection is lower.
- ✓ Your wounds will heal faster because there is more oxygen and nutrients in your body.
- ✓ You will have better breathing, blood pressure and heart rate.
- ✓ You will have less risk of getting lung and chest infections.
- ✓ You may go home sooner.



What happens to my body when I stop smoking?

When you stop smoking for:

- 20 minutes** > Your blood pressure drops to the same level as it was before your last cigarette.
- 8 hours** > The carbon monoxide level in your blood goes down to normal. (Carbon monoxide is a toxic gas. It is found in tobacco smoke and car exhaust. It is harmful to breathe in.)
- 24 hours** > Your risk of heart attack starts to go down.
- 2 weeks-3 months** > You can breathe easier because the airways in your lungs relax. You can get more air into your lungs.
- 1-9 months** > You cough less, and your lungs work better.
- 1 year** > Your risk of heart attack goes down by half compared to someone who smokes.

(Adapted with permission from Vancouver Coastal Health)



Tips to help you quit

Stopping smoking or smoking less can be hard. Doing something to replace smoking might feel different or strange. It takes practice. Keep going!

> The 4D's



DELAY

Cravings often go away in 3 to 5 minutes. Try to train your body to wait.



DRINK WATER

Instead of smoking right away, slowly drink some cold water.



DISTRACT

Make a list of things to do to keep your mind and hands busy. Think of activities you enjoy doing (for example, go for a walk, listen to music).



DEEP BREATHS

It can help you relax so you won't think about smoking.

> More helpful tips

Change the situation

Don't go to places that remind you of smoking.

Think positively

If you have stopped smoking, think about how far you've come. Do your best to keep going.

Ask for help

Talk to a friend, family member or healthcare provider.

Keep trying

Many people have quit. You can do it too. It may take more than one try. Don't give up.

(Adapted with permission from Cancer Care Ontario)