



STOP SMOKING FOR BETTER HEALTH— TAKE THE FIRST STEP TODAY

HUMAN RESOURCES - WORKPLACE WELLNESS

SUPPORTS TO HELP YOU QUIT SMOKING

Whether you decided to quit smoking, are thinking about it or would like to support someone in their journey, it is important to become familiar with the supports available. Being equipped with the right tools can help make the transition to a smoke-free life a successful one. This information sheet provides an overview of the most popular Nicotine Replacement Therapies (NRT), addresses if vaping should be used as a quit smoking aid and connects you to smoking cessation resources/supports that are available online and in our community.

NICOTINE REPLACEMENT THERAPIES

Nicotine Replacement Therapies (NRT) are often used by individuals who want to quit smoking to help them reduce the withdrawal feelings and cigarette cravings. Various controlled doses of nicotine can be delivered through the NRT, which are typically determined by the health care professional or pharmacist to wean the individual off nicotine. Attempts to quit are twice as effective when using replacement therapies or medical assistance (smokefree.gov). NRT come in many forms, the following is an overview of the most common types of NRT:

NRT #1 Patch

A patch is applied to the skin, usually to an area above the waist. A certain dose of nicotine is delivered and is slowly absorbed by your body. Using the patch helps to reduce cravings and alleviate withdrawal symptoms. It is recommended to be used as soon as the individual stops smoking. The patch should not be used while still smoking as in combination with cigarettes, a person may get a much higher dose of nicotine.

NRT #2 Inhaler

An inhaler is a plastic cylinder that looks like a cigarette. It includes a cartridge with nicotine. It is important not to confuse an inhaler with an e-cigarette. The person who uses an inhaler puffs on it like a cigarette so that the nicotine vapor is released. Unlike with smoking, during the use of the inhaler the vapor is not inhaled but is kept in the mouth so it can be absorbed through the mouth's lining. It is not recommended to drink acidic beverages while using an inhaler as they can impact its effectiveness.

NRT #3 Oral Spray

The oral spray instantly releases nicotine vapor into the mouth. Similarly to the inhaler, the nicotine that is released with the spray is supposed to be absorbed through the mouth's lining and therefore it is not recommended to inhale it.

NRT #4 Gum

The nicotine gum provides a small dose of nicotine to help an individual decrease the number of cigarettes smoked. It looks like a regular gum and there are many flavours available, however, it should not be chewed excessively as it will deliver a higher dose of nicotine than intended. The proper way to use a nicotine gum is to chew the gum a few times then park it against the cheek for about a minute - this is called the "bite and park" technique. Repeat this for about 30 minutes. An individual should not chew more than one piece of a gum at a time.

NRT #5 Lozenge

The nicotine lozenge is a hard candy that slowly releases nicotine. The lozenge should be sucked until a strong flavor is released then parked against the cheek similarly to the gum. The lozenge should not be swallowed or chewed.

NRT #6 Prescription Medication

There are two types of prescription medication available: Champix (aka varenicline) and Zyban (aka bupropion). Both medications come in the pill form and do not contain nicotine. They work by stimulating the same areas of the brain that are stimulated by nicotine when the person smokes and therefore help reduce the nicotine cravings and withdrawal symptoms.



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E-cigarettes deliver nicotine in a less harmful way. These products reduce exposure to many toxic and cancer-causing chemicals.

(Health Canada)



VAPING AND QUITTING SMOKING

Some individuals transition to vapour products to help them quit smoking. Electronic cigarettes, also known as e-cigs or vapes are battery operated devices that heat liquid (e-liquid) into a vapour that is inhaled by the user (Windsor-Essex County Health Unit). E-cigarettes can look like traditional cigarettes, pipes, pens or USB drives. Ingredients in the e-liquid vary from product to product but typically include a combination of water, food grade flavouring, propylene glycol, vegetable glycerin, and in many instances nicotine (Health Canada, 2020).

Is Vaping a Good Alternative to Smoking?

Some people believe that vaping is less harmful than smoking. The potential health risks of vaping are not yet fully known as they have not been on the market long enough to determine the short- and long-term health impacts. There are potential advantages to using these devices as a smoking cessation aid but currently there is not enough clear evidence to determine if vaping is less harmful than smoking. While vaping contains less chemicals than the traditional cigarettes, according to Johns Hopkins Medicine (2020), vaping can lead to lung injuries, raise one's blood pressure and increase adrenaline levels, which may result in a heart attack. Doctors are seeing acute lung injuries resulting from inhalation of the chemicals in vape devices or those added when these devices are also used to vape cannabis. These have resulted in serious lung damage including death (heartandstroke.ca).

In Canada, vapes with nicotine were legalized in 2018 but the production of vapour products is not completely checked by Health Canada for safety and quality leading many experts to say that these products have not been regulated in a meaningful way.

Given the limited evidence regarding e-cigarettes as an effective and safe quit smoking aid, it is recommended that individuals who are thinking of quitting smoking consult their health care provider or a community/online resource to determine the best strategy/support to quit smoking.

ONLINE AND COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Quitting smoking is hard because your body depends on the nicotine that is found in tobacco. Nicotine gum, lozenges, patches and other nicotine replacement therapies can help you stop craving the nicotine.

The combination of nicotine replacement therapies and supports are known to increase the chances of success. Before starting your quit smoking journey, explore all options you have for quitting, supports available online and across our community and create a personalized plan to meet your goal.



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RESOURCES AND SUPPORTS AVAILABLE TO YOU

Quit Smoking

Quit Smoking is a web resource from the Government of Canada – Health Canada which connects individuals to information about how to quit smoking, help others quit including supports available.

<https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/smoking-tobacco/quit-smoking.html>

Smokers Helpline

The Smokers Helpline is a free and confidential service provided by the Canadian Cancer Society. It offers smoking cessation support via phone (one-on-one conversations with a coach), text (motivation and support when needed), and online (24 hours, 7 days a week). The website includes free and personalized tools to help individuals quit successfully. The site also includes indigenous quit smoking and vaping supports.

www.smokershelpline.ca/home
Toll-free number: 1-877-513-5333
Text: iQuit to 123456

Telehealth Ontario smoking cessation program

Telehealth Ontario is a confidential phone service that is available 24 hours, 7 days a week. It offers supports to those who are quitting or thinking of quitting smoking. The service connects individuals with a Registered Nurse who is able to provide information about smoking cessation programs over the phone. In addition, callers can follow up for additional support and coaching as needed.

Toll-free number: 1-866-797-0000
TTY Service: 1-866-797

Break It Off – Quit Smoking

Break It Off is an initiative of the Canadian Cancer Society and Health Canada that promotes quitting smoking and staying smoke free to young adults. It includes an online platform that provides tips and tools to support quitting, as well as a mobile application for Android and IOS operating devices.

<https://breakitoff.ca/>

Mobile application for Android devices:

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.adikhader.breakitoff>

Mobile application for IOS devices: <https://apps.apple.com/ca/app/break-it-off-je-te-laisse/id495228310>

Quit Map

The Quit Map is an online search tool from the Canadian Cancer Society. The search tool allows users to easily find supports in their community to quit smoking.

<https://csl.cancer.ca/smokershelpline/en>

University of Windsor Employee & Family Assistance Program

Morneau Shepell is the provider of the University of Windsor's Employee and Family Assistance Program. They offer confidential counselling and information services to employees and their eligible family members. There is no referral required by the University

or by a physician/counsellor. You can get started online, via chat, e-mail or by phone. When you select "get started online" you are connected to myeap.support.com which includes an online smoking cessation program that is self-paced, personalized and interactive.

www.workhealthlife.com

Toll-free number: 1-800-387-4765

TTY Service: 1-877-338-0275

Windsor-Essex County Health Unit (WECHU)

The Quit Smoking website of the Windsor-Essex County Health Unit connects individuals to information and resources to quit smoking and stay smoke-free including:

- Start your Quit Story Facebook page
- Directory of where you can access quit medications paired with one-on-one counselling for eligible clients.
- Directory of community group sessions including STOP (Smoking Treatment for Ontario Patients) workshops where eligible participants can receive 5 weeks of free nicotine replacement therapy.
- And other resources to consider.

<https://www.wechu.org/smoking-and-vaping/quit-smoking>

Phone: (519) 258-2146 ext. 3300

Quitting smoking can have significant positive effects not only on your health but also on the wellbeing of others around you. For more information, or for a listing of the sources consulted to write this publication, please visit:

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