



# STOP SMOKING FOR BETTER HEALTH— TAKE THE FIRST STEP TODAY

HUMAN RESOURCES - WORKPLACE WELLNESS

**SUPPORTING SOMEONE WHO  
WANTS TO QUIT SMOKING:**

## UNDERSTANDING THE MYTHS

Quitting smoking is a journey that individuals do not need to go on alone. This information sheet focuses on some of the most common myths associated with quitting smoking.

### NICOTINE ADDICTION

Nicotine dependence is a known addiction to tobacco products, or other products containing the drug nicotine, such as e-cigarettes or chewing tobacco. It involves physical and psychological factors that can make it more difficult to stop smoking/using tobacco products. Nicotine releases chemicals in the brain that create a euphoric feeling that is common to addictive drugs. This euphoric feeling is the primary driver for the addiction, which may cause individuals who smoke to have several cigarettes within a day. Any addictive substance when stopped can cause withdrawal symptoms. During times of withdrawal, the individual will experience cravings particularly when they encounter their smoking triggers. During these times, individuals will need support the most.

For those trying to quit, being supported by people around them increases their chances of being successful. Anyone can offer support - a parent, friend, partner or co-worker. Your role as a supporter is not to judge but to be there when help is needed, to be supportive and caring.

#### Signs of physical dependence on nicotine include:

- The urge to smoke within 30 minutes of waking
- Ranking the first cigarette of the day as the most important
- Smoking at regular intervals throughout the day

#### Signs and symptoms of nicotine withdrawal include:

- Irritability
- Restlessness
- Anxiety
- Insomnia
- Difficult concentrating
- Fatigue

Source: camh.ca

to burn an additional 200 calories per day (hamiltonhealthsciences.ca). You can help address this myth by encouraging the individual to become more physically active and make changes in their diet such as increasing their intake of vegetables, fruits and whole grains and reducing sugary products and fast foods. The following resources may be of interest:

- [UWindsor Human Resources Wellness Campaigns](#)
- [UnlockFood.ca](#)
- [Canada's Food Guide](#)



### Quitting smoking will cost me my social circle

Smoking is often considered a very social activity. Quitting does not have to result in losing friends or one's social circle. You can help address this myth by encouraging the individual to take the time to explain to their friends/social circle the reasons for wanting to quit and how they may be of support during their journey. Encourage the individual to focus on creating new non-smoking social experiences with friends and family such as:

- Going for a walk to explore public parks
- Going out for a movie and dinner
- Hosting a smoke-free board game night
- Starting or joining a book club

### MYTHS ABOUT QUITTING

Being aware of some of the common myths associated with quitting smoking can be helpful when supporting someone who wants to quit smoking. The following are some examples:



### Quitting smoking will make me gain weight

Not all individuals who quit smoking will gain weight. Individuals who are moderate to heavy smokers may gain 5 to 10 pounds in the first 2 months after quitting since smoking causes the body



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MYTH  
#3

## Smoking helps me manage stress and keep calm

People who smoke often say that they feel less stressed after a cigarette, particularly in times of increased stress. What people actually feel is a decrease in their nicotine withdrawal symptoms and they may also feel less stressed because they have taken some time away from their stressor. However, smoking does the opposite, it increases the heart rate, tightens blood vessels, tenses muscles and allows less oxygen to reach the brain. Encourage the individual to try healthier ways to manage stress, such as going for a walk, meditating or doing breathing exercises, etc.

MYTH  
#4

## I have smoked for so long, the damage to my health is already done

Regardless of how long the person has been smoking, benefits of quitting can be felt almost immediately. Quitting smoking can add years to a person's life and improve their quality of life. The following is a list of the health benefits:

 **20 minutes after quitting:** Your blood pressure and pulse rate return to normal.

 **After 8 hours:** You can breathe easier. Your oxygen levels are back to normal and your chance of having a heart attack decreases.

 **After 24 hours:** Your lungs start to clear out the mucus. Coughing is actually a good sign.

 **After 48 hours:** You are nicotine-free. Your senses of taste and smell begin to return.

 **After 1 year:** Your risk of having a heart attack is cut in half.

 **After 10 years:** Your risk of dying from lung cancer is cut in half.

 **10-15 years after quitting:** Your risk of coronary heart disease is the same as someone who never smoked.

(Source: Canadian Cancer Society, 2020)

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:

[UWINDSOR.CA/WORKPLACEWELLNESS](http://UWINDSOR.CA/WORKPLACEWELLNESS)



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