

# SMART STEPS

Explore your  
Curiosity



quitnow.ca



BC LUNG  
FOUNDATION

## Curious about moving away from tobacco and nicotine?

Are you curious about what a tobacco & nicotine- free life would look like? How would it affect your health, your savings, your lifestyle, or your relationships?

**This booklet is designed for people at the beginning of their quit journeys.**

- Maybe you are thinking about quitting or reducing tobacco and/or vaping; or
- Maybe you want to quit or reduce but don't feel ready right now; or
- Maybe you are not interested in quitting or reducing right now.



**This booklet will not tell you to quit, but will provide you with information and activities to help you make decisions that feel right for you and your health.**



**This booklet provides useful information on:**

- Why people smoke and vape
- Understanding nicotine addiction
- Understanding your smoking or vaping behaviour
- How smoking and vaping affect your health and your life
- Costs of smoking and vaping
- Benefits of quitting or reducing
- Exploring your motivations to quit or continue smoking/vaping

## Explore your relationship with tobacco and nicotine

Your relationship with smoking or vaping is very personal. When you smoke or vape, it becomes part of your routine and your lifestyle. This section will help you better understand your relationship with smoking and vaping.

### Why do you smoke or vape?

There are **many reasons** people start to smoke or vape and why they keep smoking or vaping.



Why people smoke/use tobacco	Why people vape
It's a social activity to do with friends	It's a social activity to do with friends
For stress relief/relaxation	To help with symptoms of stress or anxiety
Something to do when bored	For fun or to do tricks
To unwind or take a break at work	They like the way it tastes or feels
To help with focus (nicotine is a stimulant)	To experiment or feel cool
They enjoy the taste or how it makes them feel	To quit smoking
It's comforting and part of their routine	

*\*If you have used vaping to quit smoking, good for you! Quitting smoking is one of the best things you can do for your health. We recommend quitting vaping eventually as well, as it also carries health risks.*

**REFLECT:** Why did you start smoking/vaping? Why do you keep smoking/vaping?

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## How often do you smoke or vape?

**ACTIVITY:** Track your smoking or vaping

Smoking or vaping can become so routine that you stop noticing how often you are doing it. Try tracking each time you smoke or vape for a couple of days. This can help you to better understand **how much time you spend smoking or vaping**, how often you smoke/vape, and how you are feeling when you pick up the cigarette or vape.

Use the Tally Sheet to record when and where you are smoking or vaping for a couple of days. See if you notice any patterns in your behaviour.



Time & Date	Cig/vape session #	Craving level from 1-3	Mood (ie: sad, happy)	Activity (what you are doing, who you are with)

**REFLECT:** What did you learn? When do you smoke or vape the most, and the least? What feelings or activities lead to smoking or vaping?

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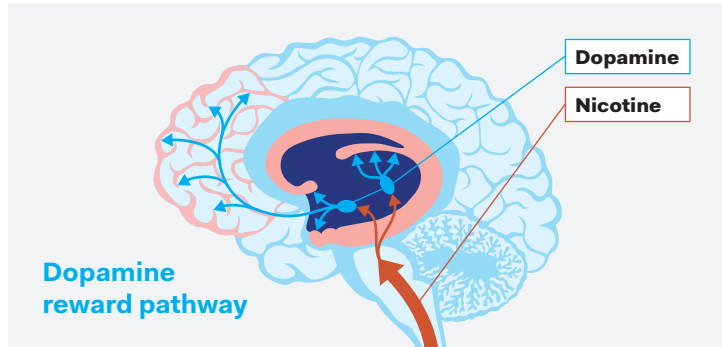
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## Understanding Nicotine Addiction

Regardless of why you started smoking or vaping, it is likely that part of the reason you have continued to smoke or vape is because nicotine is highly addictive.

### About nicotine addiction

- Nicotine reaches the brain in less than **7 seconds**.
- Nicotine is **3 times more addictive** than alcohol or cocaine and **7.5 times more addictive** than cannabis.
- One vape pod can contain the same amount of nicotine as a pack of **20 cigarettes**.



**Nicotine** causes your brain to release **dopamine**, the “**feel-good chemical**”. It can also temporarily improve your concentration and make you feel more relaxed.



This feeling is only temporary, though, and when it goes away, your body wants more. This can lead to feeling stressed or agitated, prompting you to smoke or vape again.

Over time, your brain gets used to receiving nicotine from cigarettes or vapes and starts to crave it. This makes you dependent on nicotine, meaning **you need more and more nicotine to feel 'good'**.

When you stop smoking or vaping, your nicotine levels drop and you go into withdrawal. During withdrawal, you can experience unpleasant symptoms such as irritability, restlessness, and difficulty concentrating. The only things that will relieve these symptoms are either more nicotine, or time without nicotine (quitting).

## QUIZ: How addicted are you?

Use this quiz to measure your level of nicotine dependence.\*

<b>1.</b> How soon after you wake up do you smoke your first cigarette/use your vape?	Within 5 minutes	<b>3</b>
	Within 6-30 minutes	<b>2</b>
	Within 31-60 minutes	<b>1</b>
	60 minutes+	<b>0</b>
<b>2.</b> Do you find it difficult not to smoke/vape in places you should not, like a church, library, school, movie theater, or hospital?	Yes	<b>1</b>
	No	<b>0</b>
<b>3.</b> Which cigarette/vape session would you hate to give up most?	The first one in the morning	<b>1</b>
	During or after meals	<b>0</b>
	During or after stressful situations	<b>0</b>
	None of the above	<b>0</b>
<b>4.</b> How many cigarettes do you smoke per day? Or, how many times per day do you use your vape? (Assume that one "time" consists of around 15 puffs or lasts around 10 minutes)	10 or fewer	<b>0</b>
	11 to 20	<b>1</b>
	21 to 30	<b>2</b>
	31 or more	<b>3</b>
<b>5.</b> Do you smoke/vape more in the morning than during the rest of the day?	Yes	<b>1</b>
	No	<b>0</b>
<b>6.</b> Do you smoke/vape even if you are so sick that you are in bed?	Yes	<b>1</b>
	No	<b>0</b>
<b>Add up your score...</b>	<b>Total</b>	

If you scored between **1-3**, you have a low dependence on nicotine. If you scored between **4-6**, you have a moderate dependence. If you scored between **7-10**, you have a high dependence on nicotine.

\*Source: Piper, M.E., Baker, T.B., Benowitz, N.L., Smith, S.S., & Jorenby, D.E. (2020). E-cigarette dependence measures in dual users: reliability and relations with dependence criteria and e-cigarette cessation. *Nicotine and Tobacco Research*, 22(5), 756-763.

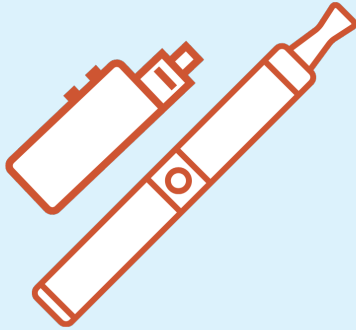
## Learn how smoking and vaping affect you

Smoking and vaping can affect your health, your finances, your relationships, and your lifestyle.

### What's in a cigarette?

There are over **7000 chemicals** in commercial tobacco smoke. Many of these chemicals are toxic, such as tar and carbon monoxide, and at least **70 are cancer-causing**. Some of these chemicals exist naturally, while others form when tobacco is burned. Cigarette companies also add chemicals to their products to mask the harsh flavour of smoke and make it easier to inhale. This can also make them more easily addictive.

- **Ammonia** - a common household cleaner
- **Arsenic** - used in rat poison
- **Benzene** - found in rubber cement and gasoline
- **Butane** - used in lighter fluid
- **Carbon monoxide** - released in car exhaust fumes
- **Formaldehyde** - embalming fluid
- **Tar** - material for paving roads
- **Nicotine** - a highly addictive chemical



## What's in a vape?

Most e-cigarettes have **nicotine and many other chemicals** in them. When e-liquid is heated, chemicals can react with each other and form new chemicals. Some chemicals in vaping products include:

- **Propylene glycol** and **vegetable glycerine**
- **Ultrafine particles** that can be inhaled deep into the lungs
- **Volatile organic compounds**
- **Cancer** - causing chemicals
- **Heavy metals** such as nickel, tin, and lead

## Health risks of smoking

Smoking **harms nearly every part of the body**. In the short term, smoking can cause coughing, shortness of breath, and difficulty breathing. It raises your heart rate and blood pressure and weakens your immune system.

## Health effects of smoking

### Smoking affects every part of the body

**Ears** - Hearing loss

**Nose** - Reduced sense of smell, nasal irritation, more colds and infections

**Lungs** - Wheezing, trouble breathing or shortness of breath, pain and tightness in the chest, frequent coughing or heavy chest colds, emphysema, chronic bronchitis, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease or asthma, lung cancer

**Stomach** - Crohn's disease, gallstones, stomach and bowel cancers

**Blood** - High blood pressure, increased white blood cell count, weakened immune system, taking longer to heal

**Brain** - Stroke, issues with memory, problem solving, and motor functioning

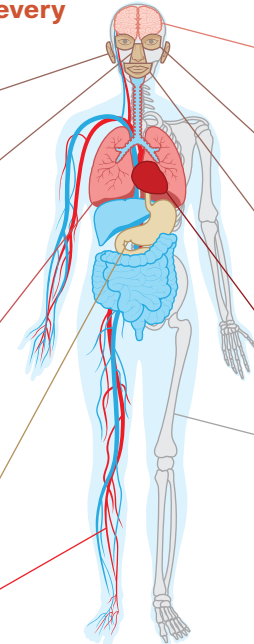
**Eyes** - Cataracts, blindness, loss of night vision and glaucoma

**Mouth** - Oral cancer, cavities, bad breath, sores in the mouth

**Heart** - Heart disease, heart attack, poor circulation, inflammation and high blood pressure

**Bones** - Bone disease, bone density loss, more broken bones and fractures

**If you smoke, you are 10 times more likely to get cancer than a person who never smoked.**



## Health risks of vaping

We are still learning about the health risks of vaping. From what we know so far, **vaping can damage the respiratory, cardiovascular, and immune systems**. It can lead to increased risk of chronic pulmonary disorders, stroke, and heart attack. Some people have also experienced acute (immediate) lung injuries from vaping.

**REFLECT:** How does (smoking/vaping) make you feel?

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## Other ways that smoking and vaping may affect you

Smoking and vaping may affect other areas of your life:



**Your social life:** Smoking or vaping can influence who you date, who your friends are, and the places you go pass.



**Your lifestyle:** Smoking and vaping take up your time and energy. You may spend time and energy worrying about your vaping, wondering where you can smoke next, buying cigarettes.

Smoking and vaping can also reduce how much energy you have to do activities. Things like walking up the stairs, playing with your kids, or working out may be more difficult.



**Your finances:** Smoking, and to a certain extent vaping, is expensive and takes a toll on your wallet.

## What does smoking or vaping cost?

Smoking and vaping can take a toll on your bank account. For example, someone who smokes 1 pack of cigarettes (20 cigarettes) a day that cost approx. \$15/pack, is **spending \$450 each month!** The chart below shows what someone who smokes a pack a day spends over 10 years.





## Explore your motivations

A relationship with nicotine can be tough to end, and many people go back and forth with the decision to quit. If you are **thinking about quitting but are not quite ready**, this section will help you explore your motivations to quit and the obstacles standing in your way.

**REFLECT:** What do you like about smoking/vaping? What do you not like?

After...	1 week	1 month	6 months	1 year	10 years
Amount spent...	\$105	\$420	\$2,520	\$5,040	<b>\$50,400</b>

**ACTIVITY:** Calculate how much you spend on smoking or vaping. What could you do with that money instead?

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Smoking/vaping LIKES	Smoking/vaping DISLIKES

## Rewards and Roadblocks

### Roadblocks

Many people have barriers that prevent them from trying to quit. **Identify your barriers so you can find solutions to overcome them.**

#### Common roadblocks around quitting include:

- ***“I need to smoke/vape to help me de-stress”***  
Smoking and vaping only temporarily reduce your stress. Eventually, nicotine makes you feel MORE stressed. It also doesn't help you deal with the sources of your stress. You can find new tools to help you deal with stress after you quit.
- ***“I don't have money for nicotine replacement therapy (NRT)”***  
NRT (e.g., nicotine patch or gum) and quit smoking medications are available for free or at a lower cost for British Columbians. You can get a 3-month supply by talking to your doctor or pharmacist. Even if you do pay for NRT, you will save much more money by quitting than if you continue to smoke or vape.
- ***“I only smoke/vape socially, I don't need to quit”***  
Even smoking or vaping socially increases your risk of negative health effects. You are also at risk of starting to smoke or vape regularly (e.g., daily). Quitting will help you take control of your health.

- ***“I'm too addicted to quit”***

It's true that nicotine is highly addictive, but there are tools available to help you. Nicotine replacement therapy and quit medications can help you break the addiction.

- ***“My friends or family smoke/vape, I won't be able to hang out with them”***

Being around others smoking or vaping can be tough when you are trying to quit. Remember that your loved ones care about you and ultimately want what is best for you and for your health. You may even inspire them to try quitting as well!

#### ACTIVITY: Fill in the blank

*I want to quit smoking/vaping, but*

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**Our Quit Coaches can help you work through your barriers to quitting.**

**Visit [www.quitnow.ca/coach](http://www.quitnow.ca/coach) to talk to a Quit Coach!**



## Reasons

**There are so many reasons to quit or reduce smoking and vaping.**

- Improved health
- Financial savings
- Being a role model for friends and family
- Increased confidence and self-esteem
- Freedom from addiction
- More energy
- More time

**REFLECT:** What does your smoke- or vape- free life look like?

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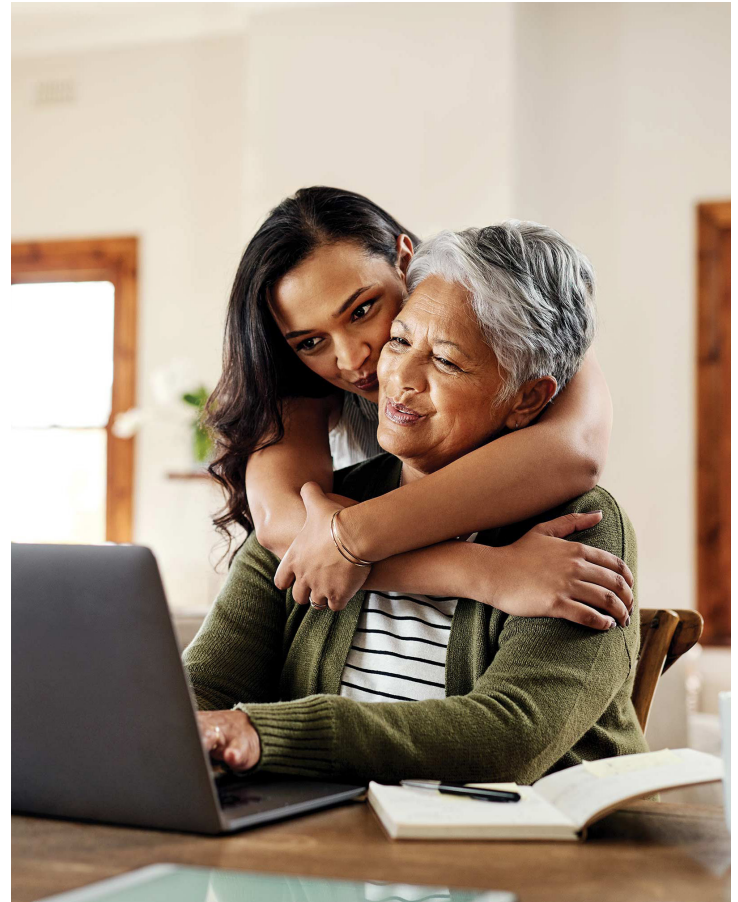
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If you decide to quit, what do you hope will be different for you? And what are you most looking forward to?

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## Benefits of Quitting

**Quitting smoking can add years to your life** and lets you take control of your health. Here are just some of the ways that your body starts to repair itself after you quit smoking:



### Within 8 Hours:

- oxygen level goes back to normal
- carbon monoxide level drops



### Within 48 Hours:

- chances of having a heart attack start to decrease
- taste and smell start improving



### Within 72 Hours:

- breathing will get easier as your airways relax
- lung capacity begins to increase



### Within 2 - 10 Weeks:

- circulation improves and exercising becomes easier
- lung capacity can increase by 30%



### Within 6 Months:

- reductions in coughing, sinus congestion, tiredness, shortness of breath and colds



### Within 1 year:

- 50% less likely to have a heart attack caused by smoking



### Within 10 Years:

- risk of dying from lung cancer will decrease by half



### Within 15 Years:

- risk of dying from a heart attack is the same as a person who has never smoked

*We are still learning about how vaping affects your health in the long term. From what we know right now, quitting vaping can help you breathe better, reduce coughing, strengthen your immune system. It may also reduce your risk of developing lung diseases and of having a heart attack or stroke.*

## Pros and Cons

**ACTIVITY:** The Costs and Benefits of Smoking and Vaping

Reflect on the benefits of quitting and use it to fill out this table. Come back to this table periodically to see how you are **feeling about making a quit attempt.**

The Benefits of Tobacco Use	The Costs of Tobacco Use
Helps me feel relaxed (example only)	I have to go outside in the cold to smoke (example only)
The Benefits of QUITTING	The Costs of QUITTING
I will save lots of money (example only)	I will have to avoid my friends who smoke (example only)

## What are your next steps?

**You've made it to the end of this booklet!** We hope this booklet has helped you explore your curiosity about quitting or reducing smoking or vaping. If you're wondering where to go from here, try some of the following:

### Make use of QuitNow's resources:



Make a profile on [www.quitnow.ca](http://www.quitnow.ca) and set up a **Quit Plan**. You don't need to set a quit date. You can explore the different sections of our website, learn more about quitting, and read posts from others who are quitting on the Community Forum.



Sign up for our **Text Tips** or **Email Tips** programs. These programs start with a couple of weeks of motivational messages to help you feel ready to take the next step and set quit date. Visit [quitnow.ca/community-and-support](http://quitnow.ca/community-and-support) to sign up.



Set up a call with a **Quit Coach**. Our Coaches can address questions or concerns you may have about quitting or reducing. **Call toll-free at 1-877-455-2233** to schedule a call. You can also **live chat with a Coach** if you have a question or need immediate assistance.

## Try challenging yourself with small goals to build up your confidence to quit or reduce:

- Next time you have the urge to smoke or vape, **try to resist for 5 minutes** or skip it entirely. See how you feel!
- Track your smoking or vaping behaviour for a week (where, when, how much) to notice patterns in your behaviour.
- Try to **cut out one cigarette or vape session each day** by changing something about your routine. - *E.g., If you vape while driving to work, try taking a different route or carpooling instead.*
- **Set a SMART goal** with something you can do to increase your readiness to quit. - *E.g., "I will not smoke while having my morning coffee by switching to tea instead starting July 1."*
- **Limit where you smoke or vape.** - *E.g. I won't smoke in my car, or I won't smoke at work. Or, smoke only in one room of your house/apartment.*

If you are feeling ready to take the next step and try to quit or reduce, great! **Visit [quitnow.ca/join](http://quitnow.ca/join) to make a Quit Plan** and set a date to quit or reduce.

**If you're still feeling unsure about quitting or are not interested in quitting right now, that is okay. Come back to this booklet the next time you're feeling curious about a tobacco/vape-free life - WE'RE HERE FOR YOU!**

## Notes

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**Support Can Make All the Difference!**

**For Help with Quitting Call or Click:**

**1-877-455-2233**  
**[www.quitnow.ca](http://www.quitnow.ca)**





**A tobacco and nicotine-free life  
is in your hands.**

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