



Moving towards wellness:

Smoking cessation

If you are a smoker, do you notice yourself turning to smoking when feeling stressed?

Research has shown that any short term benefits that smoking seems to have on your emotional wellbeing are outweighed by the higher rates of smoking-related physical health problems, such as lung cancer, that are common in people with mental health concerns.

Quitting is the best way to break this cycle of smoking and stress. Quitting has such an effect on mood that it has been shown to improve depression.

Smoking cigarettes including cigars, electronic cigarettes and other tobacco products can not only have detrimental effects on your own physical and mental wellbeing, but also on those around you. These can include:

- Increased risk of cardiovascular disease
- Cancers, specifically oral and lung cancer
- Coronary artery disease
- Ageing skin, wrinkles and wound infection
- Increased emotional distress and anxiousness

The earlier you quit smoking, the greater the health benefits on yourself and those around you, both physically and mentally.

Strategies to assist smoking cessations

Quitting can be challenging, but it is worth it - feel better, look better, save money and protect those around you.

Cravings are most frequent in the first few days after quitting. Try and remember the 4D's when those cravings start to kick in:

D

Delay:
acting on the urge to smoke. After 5 minutes the urge to smoke weakens.

D

Deep breath:
take a long slow breath in and slowly release it out again. Repeat 3 times.

D

Drink water:
slowly holding it in your mouth a little longer to savour the taste.

D

Do something:
else to take your mind off smoking. Doing some exercise is a good alternative.

“Remember... if plan A doesn't work, try for plan B. Don't give up”

Other tips include:



Write down the reasons for quitting

e.g. lowering your risk of disease, not exposing family or friends to secondhand smoke and keep in clear sight.



Make a plan

e.g. set a quit-smoking date and then abruptly stop on that date or if this isn't for you, gradually cut back your amount per day or week. Research shows that it takes 21 days to break a habit/addiction. Your body may experience noticeable physiological withdrawal symptoms however it is important to remember that the feeling is temporary.



Consider other options if your first plan hasn't worked

e.g. cut back gradually such as delaying your first cigarette of the day or progressively lengthening the time between cigarettes. Build on each success until you have quit smoking entirely and don't feel like you may relapse.



Manage your stress

e.g. practice relaxation exercise or deep breathing. Stress and anxiety can increase your urge to smoke and derail your effort to quit smoking.

Smoking cessation milestones



Day 1: Risk of heart attack starts to go down



3-9 months: Your coughing and shortness of breath will almost be eliminated



48 hours: Your taste and smell receptors start to heal



1 year: Your risk of coronary heart disease is about half that of someone who continues to smoke



2 weeks: You should start breathing easier, your circulation will improve and your cravings should ease



5 years: Your risk of stroke is significantly reduced



6 weeks: Withdrawal symptoms will have largely disappeared

“Remember... if plan A doesn't work, try for plan B. Don't give up”

Additional resources

If you or someone you know may need assistance, please refer to any of the below help lines or additional resources:

- Quitline – 131 848
- Quit Victoria – www.quit.org.au
- Headspace – www.headspace.org.au
- Your workplace EAP (line open 24/7) – 1300 687 327
- Health for Life hub for detailed fact sheets

Resources upon request.