



Provincial Health Services Authority

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

## Stop smoking today.

### 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 healthcare 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.
- Contact [VGH Smoking Cessation Clinic](#)\* ([cessationclinic@vch.ca](mailto: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](http://quitnow.ca)). [Group support sessions](#) also available.
- Use [Talk Tobacco](#)\* for FREE Indigenous quit smoking support online or by phone 1-833-998-8255.

\*also provides support for stopping vaping

### BC Smoking Cessation Program

Provides **FREE nicotine replacement therapy (NRT)** for stopping smoking or use of other tobacco products. Visit [gov.bc.ca/bcsmokingcessation](http://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

## Why is stopping smoking before surgery important?

When you smoke or breathe in secondhand 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:

<b>20 minutes</b>	Your blood pressure drops to the same level as it was before your last cigarette.
<b>8 hours</b>	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.)
<b>24 hours</b>	Your risk of heart attack starts to go down.
<b>2 weeks-3 months</b>	You can breathe easier because the airways in your lungs relax. You can get more air into your lungs.
<b>1-9 months</b>	You cough less, and your lungs work better.
<b>1 year</b>	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!

<b>The 4D's</b>	<b>More helpful tips</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>☑ <b>Delay</b> Cravings often go away in 3 to 5 minutes. Try to train your body to wait.</li><li>☑ <b>Drink water</b> Instead of smoking right away, slowly drink some cold water.</li><li>☑ <b>Distract</b> 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).</li><li>☑ <b>Deep breaths</b> It can help you relax so you won't think about smoking.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>☑ <b>Change the situation</b> Don't go to places that remind you of smoking.</li><li>☑ <b>Think positively</b> If you have stopped smoking, think about how far you've come. Do your best to keep going.</li><li>☑ <b>Ask for help</b> Talk to a friend, family member or healthcare provider.</li><li>☑ <b>Keep trying</b> Many people have quit. You can do it too. It may take more than one try. Don't give up.</li></ul>

*(Adapted with permission from Cancer Care Ontario)*