

## Smoking – It Is Never Too Late To Stop

*“I have smoked 2 packs of cigarettes a day for 40 years. What is the use of quitting now?”*

### **Why Should I Stop Smoking?**

If you stop smoking, you are likely to add years to your life, breathe more easily, and have more energy. You will have extra money for spending or saving and food will taste better. By quitting smoking, you will:

- Reduce the chance of cancer, heart attack, and lung disease.
- Have better blood circulation.
- Have healthier family members, particularly grandchildren.
- Become a life-style example for children and grandchildren.
- Eliminate the odor of smoke in your clothes and hair.
- Have a more sensitive sense of smell.

### **What Does Smoking Do To Me?**

Smoking shortens your life. It damages your lungs and airways. It can cause a cough that does not go away. It can lead to chronic bronchitis, and if you do not quit, it can lead to emphysema. It reduces the life of the average smoker by 12 years.

Lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer deaths for both men and women in Canada. The risk of developing lung cancer increases sharply the more you smoke and the longer you smoke.<sup>1</sup>

Smoking can also increase the risk of developing cancer of the bladder, cervix, colon and rectum, esophagus, kidney, larynx, mouth and throat, pancreas, stomach and some types of ovarian tumours.<sup>2</sup>

### **Why Should I Quit At My Age?**

It is never too late to quit smoking. The minute you stop smoking, your body begins to clean itself of tobacco poisons. Here's how:

- Within 8 hours, carbon monoxide levels drop in your body and oxygen levels in your blood increases.
- After 2 days, your sense of smell and taste begin to improve.
- Within 2 weeks to 3 months, your lungs work better making it easier to breathe.

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<sup>1</sup> Canadian Cancer Society (2008). *Quit Smoking: Why should I quit*. Canadian Cancer Society. Retrieved, October 1, 2008 from, [http://www.cancer.ca/Ontario/Prevention/Quit%20smoking/Why%20should%20I%20quit.aspx?sc\\_lang=en](http://www.cancer.ca/Ontario/Prevention/Quit%20smoking/Why%20should%20I%20quit.aspx?sc_lang=en)

<sup>2</sup> Canadian Cancer Society (2008).

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### Why Should I Quit At My Age?

(Continued)

- After 6 months, coughing, sinus congestion, tiredness and shortness of breath improve.
- After 1 year, your risk of a smoking-related heart attack is reduced by half.<sup>3</sup>

Quitting cannot undo permanent lung damage, but it may slow further damage to your lungs. In fact, within 10 to 15 years of quitting, your risk of getting cancer and heart disease is almost as low as that of a non-smoker.

### How Can I Break The Habit?

Smoking is a strong addiction for both body and mind. That is why it is so hard to stop. But, people do succeed. Here are some things you can do to help you to stop smoking:

- Make a firm decision to quit.
- Choose a date to stop smoking.
- Do not choose a substitute such as a pipe, cigars, or smokeless tobacco. They are just as dangerous.
- Pick one or more of the methods below to help you quit:
  - ✓ Read self-help literature.
  - ✓ Take a quit-smoking class.
  - ✓ Use individual or group counseling.
  - ✓ Join a support group or get a friend to quit with you.
  - ✓ Take medicine to help with nicotine withdrawal.
  - ✓ Use nicotine replacement therapy.

### Resources **Canadian Cancer Society**

Web site: [www.cancer.ca](http://www.cancer.ca)

Smoker's Help Line – Tel. 1-877-513-5333

### **Health Canada**

Web site: [www.hc-sc.gc.ca](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca)

Ontario Program Links:

Web site: [www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hl-vs/tobac-tabac/quit-cesser/info/on-eng.php](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hl-vs/tobac-tabac/quit-cesser/info/on-eng.php)

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