

## ADVOCATING FOR A SMOKE-FREE WORLD

A long-time advocate for tough tobacco control legislation, the Heart and Stroke Foundation has been instrumental in public education and advocacy campaigns to strengthen tobacco control legislation and regulations affecting second-hand smoke, tobacco-related pricing, labelling, advertising, and sponsorship. The Foundation and its partners have helped sharply reduce smoking rates by over 62% in the last 40 years – meaning fewer deaths. In 1965, 50% of Canadians smoked. In 2011, only 17% smoked.

This is what happens when you put your heart into it™.



HEART &  
STROKE  
FOUNDATION

To find more information about heart disease, stroke, how to live a healthy life, as well as how you can offer much needed support in your community, visit

[heartandstroke.ca](http://heartandstroke.ca)

or call

1-888-HSF-INFO (473-4636)

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# Heart&Stroke Just Breathe

Becoming and remaining smoke free



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## SMOKING, HEART DISEASE AND STROKE

Smoking and/or exposure to second-hand smoke has many negative health effects that increase your risk of developing heart disease and stroke. Smoking contributes to the build-up of plaque in your arteries (atherosclerosis), increases the risk of blood clots, reduces the oxygen in your blood, increases your blood pressure, and makes your heart work harder.

- **Smokers are 3 times more likely to die of heart disease.**
- **Smokers are 3 times more likely to have a stroke and have nearly double the risk of ischemic stroke.**
- **Smokers who have high blood pressure, and/or high cholesterol are 4 to 8 times more likely to have heart disease or stroke.**
- **Women who smoke and use birth control pills are significantly more likely to have heart disease or stroke.**
- **Smoking increases your risk of developing angina (chest pain).**  
If your heart is not getting sufficient blood flow, you can experience chest pain.
- **Smokers are more likely than non-smokers to have atherosclerosis (hardening of the arteries).**  
Atherosclerosis is often called hardening of the arteries. This is the build up of fatty deposits on the inside of the arteries. This build-up makes it harder for the blood to get through the arteries and leads to higher blood pressure.
- **Smoking is the greatest single risk factor leading to peripheral vascular disease (blood vessel disease).**  
When the blood vessels are diseased or damaged, you often suffer from cold hands or feet. If a blood clot should form in your arm or leg, you could have pain, lose the use of that limb, or even require amputation. Physicians call this peripheral vascular disease.
- **Individuals with diabetes are at greater risk of peripheral vascular disease.**

## WHY SMOKE?



Many people smoke because they are hooked. Smoking is an addiction, and it's hard to stop.

For some people, smoking is a way to handle being lonely and under stress. It's a way to take a break.

Many people smoke because their family, friends and co-workers smoke.

Some people, especially young adults smoke because they think it will help them be cool and stay thin. They also want to look sexy like the people in the tobacco ads. Tobacco companies have worked hard to convince young people that smoking is exciting, sexy and stylish. Despite the fact that smoking is a killer, young adults (age 20-24) smoking rates are still at 26% for males and 17% for females.

## The good news

The good news – Once you become smoke-free and avoid exposure to second-hand smoke, you will immediately reduce your risk of heart attack and stroke. The sooner you become smoke-free the sooner your body can start to recover and it doesn't take long to see the effects. **Stop smoking today and feel the positive difference in your breathing, exercise tolerance and quality of life.**

**WITHIN 48 HOURS**, your chances of having a heart attack start to go down and your sense of smell and taste begin to improve.

**WITHIN 1 YEAR**, your risk of developing heart disease or stroke is half of that of a smoker.

**WITHIN 5 - 15 YEARS**, your risk of heart attack is the same as someone who never smoked at all.

## Becoming smoke-free

Changing a habit and an addiction isn't easy but **YOU CAN DO IT!** If you are thinking about quitting, then you're one step closer to becoming tobacco-free.

## Tips for becoming smoke-free

**Learn your smoking triggers** Figure out when you tend to smoke. Is it when you have a coffee or go out for a drink with friends, or when you are stressed? Identifying your triggers is one of the most important steps to becoming smoke-free.

**Break the connection** Break the habit. Once you can identify your triggers, change your routines. When you feel the need to smoke, stop, see if you can wait and do something else, such as walking or breathing exercises. Try to keep your hands and mouth busy, drink water, brush your teeth; snack on raw vegetables or chew gum.

**Set a "Quit Date"** If you are ready to quit, set a date now, write it down and tell a friend or family member you've decided to become smoke-free.

**Make your home and car smoke free.** The more difficult you make it for yourself and others to smoke, the less you will.

**Ask for help.** Becoming smoke-free can be hard, so don't be afraid to ask for help and support from family, friends and your doctor. Nicotine replacement and prescription products may be helpful. Please speak with your health care professional about becoming smoke free and to find out what is the right method to help you quit.

**Look for prevention** or "Quit smoking" programs in your community. For more information on quitting and quit-lines, visit [heartandstroke.ca](http://heartandstroke.ca) and search "smoke free" or Health Canada at [gosmokefree.ca](http://gosmokefree.ca) or 1-800-O-Canada.



## DID YOU KNOW?

Being smoke-free has enormous benefits for your health and the health of the people around you.

More than 37,000 Canadians will die prematurely each year due to tobacco use and almost 6,300 non-smokers die each year from exposure to second-hand smoke.

Smokeless or chewing tobacco is not safer than smoking, it leads to addiction and dependence as the exposure to nicotine is similar to that of cigarettes. Smokeless tobacco restricts your blood vessels and therefore increases heart rate and blood pressure. People who use smokeless tobacco also have higher cholesterol levels than those who do not use tobacco.

## SECOND-HAND SMOKE

**Second-hand smoke is the smoke we breathe when we are with smokers. This smoke is harmful – both to non-smokers AND smokers.**

- Second-hand smoke contains over 4000 chemicals and at least 50 of them can cause cancer.
- Heart disease is more common in non-smokers who live with smokers.
- Bronchitis and pneumonia is more common in children who live with smokers.
- Children, especially babies, who live with smokers have more colds, more chest infections and more ear infections.
- Children who have asthma or allergies have more health problems when they live with smokers.

**Second-hand smoke contains more carbon monoxide and more tar than the smoke inhaled directly by the smoker! This puts your health at greater risk.**

- It also contains more ammonia, benzene, and several other dangerous chemicals.
- Lower tar and lower nicotine cigarettes are not safer, as they release the same amount of toxic chemicals in the air.

**Second-hand smoke also affects babies before they are born. Smokers have a higher chance of having miscarriages, stillbirths, premature babies and smaller babies at birth.**

**So, even if we don't smoke, we still need smoke-free work-places, restaurants and other public places.**



## AND WHAT ABOUT THE KIDS?

**How can we help our children to be tobacco-free? Here are some ways to make it harder for them to become addicted.**

**Tougher laws** - prevent sale of tobacco to minors (this includes spitting or chewing tobacco).

**Ban smoking** in all schools, workplaces, restaurants and all public places.

Make cigarettes more expensive by **increasing taxes**.

**Make education programs more available.** Kids still don't know enough about the dangers of smoking.

**Make non-smokers "Cool"**, promote pop stars, athletes, teachers and parents who do not smoke.

**Make "Quit-smoking Programs" adapted to youth available.** These programs need to be free of charge, accessible and understanding of the pressures facing teenagers today.

