Smoking, Vaping & COVID-19
Frequently Asked Questions

Do I have a higher risk of getting COVID-19 if I smoke or vape?

When you smoke or vape tobacco, cannabis, or e-cigarettes, you touch your mouth and lips often. This makes it easier to catch a virus from your hands. Sharing cigarettes, joints, vapes, or hookah products can also spread the COVID-19 virus from one person to another. We also know that you have a higher risk of lung infections if you smoke. This is important to know because COVID-19 is an infection that mainly affects the lungs.

What can I do to lower my risk of COVID-19 if I smoke or vape?

If you smoke, there are ways to lower your risk of COVID-19:
- Wash your hands well with soap and water before and after you smoke or vape.
- Don't smoke or vape in groups.
- Don't share smoking or vaping products.

To protect the lung health of others you live with, go outside to smoke or vape. You may already be thinking about quitting. Quitting can lower your risk of COVID-19.

If I smoke or vape, am I more likely to get really sick from COVID-19?

New research suggests that if you smoke, you're more likely to have worse symptoms and outcomes with COVID-19. This means you may need treatment in a hospital, such as needing oxygen and help with breathing. Research shows that vaping damages the lungs and may even cause lung disease. More research is still needed, but it's possible that symptoms of COVID-19 may be more serious if you vape.

Is it a good idea to quit smoking or vaping during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Yes. Quitting smoking or vaping can improve your lung and heart health. These health benefits happen almost right away. Quitting smoking or vaping can also protect you from lung infections and help you recover from them. If you use vaping to help you quit smoking, it's best if you quit vaping as well to protect your health. This may feel like a very stressful time to try to quit smoking. But research shows that quitting smoking can also improve your mental health. If you're having trouble coping or dealing with stress, call the Mental Health Helpline at 1-877-303-2642. The Helpline is free, confidential, and available 24 hours a day.

What is the difference between nicotine withdrawal symptoms and COVID-19 symptoms?

When you quit smoking or using vaping products with nicotine, you may have nicotine withdrawal symptoms such as:
- cravings for nicotine
- getting upset easily (irritability)
- trouble concentrating

These symptoms don't usually last long and go away after about 2 to 4 weeks. A cough and sore throat are also symptoms of nicotine withdrawal. If you have a cough or sore throat, you may worry about COVID-19. So it's important to remember that these symptoms can also happen when you quit smoking or using vaping products with nicotine. Fever is a symptom of COVID-19 but it isn't a symptom of nicotine withdrawal. If you're worried about your symptoms, do the online COVID-19 self-assessment.

What supports are available to help me quit?

There are many supports to help you quit smoking or vaping. These include nicotine replacement therapy (such as patches or gum), prescription medicines and counselling. You are more likely to actually quit smoking when you take quitting medications to help you quit and have counselling. Talk to your pharmacist or doctor to see if they offer phone support. They can also answer any questions you have about quitting smoking and the options to help you quit. You can also get information and support from AlbertaQuits.
- Call 1-866-710-QUIT (7848). Free and confidential support is available from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., 7 days a week.
- Text ABQUITS to 123456.
- Visit www.albertaquits.ca

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