

Wellness Articles

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If you would like to be added to the distribution list for these articles, please email: Rebecca.johnson2@albertahealthservices.ca. You will receive a monthly email containing articles for the upcoming four weeks.

An archive of past wellness articles is available at <http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/9966.asp>

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Start a smoke-free and vape-free life

You're ready to start a smoke-free and vape-free life. Here are some suggestions for you, as you get ready to make the change.

1. Stock up on supplies

Withdrawal on the first day—and after—can be intense.

Using nicotine replacement therapy or pharmacotherapy doubles your chance of successfully quitting. Get advice from a pharmacist or your doctor.

And have lots of healthy snacks and gadgets on hand to help with cravings, keep your hands busy and keep you distracted. Common supplies include:

- Gum or mints
- Cinnamon sticks
- Unsalted sunflower seeds
- Crunchy veggies such as carrots and celery
- Herbal or decaffeinated tea
- Stress ball, fidget spinner or Rubik's Cube
- Supplies for current or new hobbies such as knitting or painting.

2. Stay positive

Try not to let negative thoughts overtake you. Quitting is hard, and for the first few days you'll need to take it one hour at a time. But remember, you've got this. Make a list of your reasons for quitting and keep it handy—in your wallet, on your fridge door, even taped to your computer at work.

Try to focus on why you chose to quit in the first place and envision how good you'll feel when you are smoke-free for good! Think of a positive mantra—perhaps “I will beat this and be smoke-free”—and repeat it over and over if you feel negative thoughts slipping in.

3. Avoid your triggers

Triggers may include places, people or situations that cause you to want to smoke or vape. Everyone has their own triggers, so know yours and avoid them where possible. Remember the four Ds: delay, deep breathe, drink (water) and do. Here are more tips for overcoming common triggers:

- Alcohol can reduce your resolve to stay quit. Consider drinking water or herbal tea as alternatives.
- Avoid caffeine, as it's a major trigger and can give you the jitters. Try an alternate beverage like tea, juice or water.
- Stress can trigger an urge to vape or smoke, so try to stay calm and do some deep breathing. Consider yoga or meditation to help you stay relaxed.
- Avoid being around other people who smoke or vape. This might be hard if your family or friends smoke or vape, but ask that they don't smoke or vape around you and organize activities where people can't smoke, such as going to the movies.
- If sitting around after meals is a trigger, get up and move. Do the dishes, brush your teeth, call a friend, go for a walk or go to the gym.

4. Find help

QuitCore is a free group support program that provides Albertans 18 years and up with the tools and skills they need to quit vaping and using tobacco. The program consists of six 90-minute sessions over a period of up to nine weeks at various locations around the province.

To get help, text: ABQUITS to 123456. Or call 1-866-710-7848.

Or join a group in your community to share your stories, learn new coping strategies and celebrate milestones together. To find a session near you and to get customized email tips about quitting, go to www.albertaquits.ca.

Lastly, remember that setbacks sometimes happen. They don't mean you've failed. Slipping up is a normal part of the process, and we learn new things each time we try. It is possible to successfully stop smoking. Sometimes you have to just keep trying.