

IS IT IMPOSSIBLE TO KICK A CIGARETTE ADDICTION?

No, it's not impossible. Millions of Canadians have quit smoking. To quit successfully, you need a strong reason to quit and a willingness to keep trying even if you have a relapse. Family, friends and coworkers can help just by letting you know that they care and by helping to keep daily stress from adding to the burden.

IT CAN BE DONE!

HOW CAN I HELP A SMOKER QUIT?

You can show you care by asking them how you can help.

The Lung Association has materials designed to help smokers take the next step towards a smoke-free future. They have information for family and friends of smokers as well. Contact your Lung Association today.

B R E A T H E
the lung association

65 Brunswick St.,
Fredericton, NB
1-800-565-LUNG (5864) |
info@nb.lung.ca

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FACTS ABOUT

Nicotine Addiction



www.nb.lung.ca

WHY IS IT SO HARD FOR SOME PEOPLE TO QUIT?

Cigarettes contain **nicotine**, an addictive drug. This is one reason some people find it very hard to quit smoking. Nicotine is as addictive as illegal narcotics such as cocaine or heroin.

Part of the dependence on cigarettes is psychological. In their minds, smoker's link cigarette smoking with pleasure – coffee after dinner, getting together with friends, talking on the phone, or just relaxing. Nicotine can also lower stress, anxiety, and boredom. Together, the nicotine addiction and the psychological associations make smoking a tough habit to break.

WHAT IS NICOTINE?

Nicotine is a drug that is found in the tobacco leaf. At low doses, nicotine can stimulate certain nerve cells, helping smokers feel more alert or relaxed depending on amount of nicotine and other factors. At higher doses, nicotine is a poison that has been used as an insecticide.

WHAT DOES NICOTINE DO?

Nicotine has a powerful effect on the brain and the central nervous system. When smoke is inhaled, nicotine first goes into the lungs and bloodstream. Within seven seconds, about one-quarter of the nicotine has gone through the bloodstream straight to the brain. Tolerance to nicotine begins with the first cigarette. Although the first time someone smokes they often become ill and dizzy, the more they smoke the less they are bothered.

HOW DOES NICOTINE AFFECT THE BODY?

Most addictive drugs change mood, feelings and actions by entering the brain and causing some pleasant effects. For smokers, nicotine gives a real “hit” when it reaches the brain, which then triggers a wide range of responses throughout the body.

For instance, nicotine causes an increase in heart rate and in the rate of breathing. At the same time, blood vessels get narrower and blood flow to the hands and feet slows.

Nicotine has an effect on chemicals that regulate mood, learning, alertness, ability to concentrate and performance.

Nicotine also increases alpha waves, the brain activity pattern associated with relaxation. Smoking also triggers the release of endorphins, the body's natural tranquilizers.

I would like more information on*

- Asthma
- COPD
- Quitting Smoking
- Radon
- Indoor Air Quality
- Outdoor Air Quality
- Other _____

*Please see reverse

THIS SOUNDS CHAOTIC

Yes, but there is evidence that nicotine's effects are different at different times of the day. First thing in the morning, nicotine speeds up the brain and digestive tract. Later, it seems to slow things down. A surprising thing about nicotine is that it may act as either a stimulant or sedative.

Whether its effects speed a person up or helps them to relax, depends on the amount of nicotine, the person's metabolism, the amount of stress exposure, and the time of day.

HOW DO SMOKERS BECOME “HOOKED”?

The amount of nicotine in the blood peaks at about the time that the cigarette butt is put out. It is then cleared from the blood and the rest of the body quickly. Within a half hour, many smokers need another dose of nicotine. This means that they need more and more cigarettes to achieve the same effect up to a point.

Eventually, they find the number of cigarettes that keeps them at the level they need. Most smokers need about 10 cigarettes a day to maintain a comfort zone.

CAN ADDICTED SMOKERS QUIT SUCCESSFULLY?

In fact, the average smoker quits about **seven times** before they are successful. Each attempt teaches the smoker new skills that can help make the next attempt the successful one.

Being a recovering smoker is a the lifelong commitment.