

ManitobaQuits

BREATHE EASY FEEL FINE

Quitting or reducing smoking is good for your mental health

People who quit smoking report decreased stress and anxiety as well as decreased rates of panic attacks, suicidal ideation or suicide-related acts.

Make quitting or reducing smoking a time to focus on your mental health. Instead of smoking, choose activities like going for a walk, calling a friend, or taking five minutes to do some deep breathing.



Tips for breathing easy and feeling fine

Find affirmations that speak to you for before, during and after your quit. For example, “I deserve to live a smoke-free life”, “I know this craving will eventually pass”, “I am finally free and enjoying my freedom.” Repeat to yourself as needed.

Prepare to respond to triggers. For example, if you’re worried about “blowing up” in anger, promise to give yourself five-minute time outs. Learn techniques for dealing with stress like deep- or focused breathing.

Start new routines. Instead of a smoke break, take a meditation break.

Focus on your successes and reward yourself. **Practice positive self-talk** and kindness.

Create a support team. Ask friends, family and co-workers to be part of your team. Think about how you might call upon your support team. Let them know you might need to call or text them for a break.

Set realistic goals. Aim high, acknowledge the challenge, but be realistic.

Seek advice from professionals. From help-lines to doctors, resources are out there to help you reach your goal of reducing and quitting smoking.

Mental illness and quitting smoking

Living with mental illness is not a good reason to avoid reducing or quitting smoking.

People living with mental illness report they do want to quit. Yet people living with mental illness are rarely encouraged or supported to do so.

Instead, people living with mental illness are often encouraged to smoke, sometimes as a reward for good behaviour in hospital or because of the persistent myth that smoking helps with medication or symptom management. This may be why people living with mental illness are 2 to 4 times more likely to smoke and to smoke more than people living without a mental illness.

Quitting smoking can be hard for anyone, but for people living with mental illness, the moods associated with withdrawal

symptoms like stress, sadness, or anger can feel like (or be mislabelled by others) as symptoms of their mental health condition. As well, the physical effects of withdrawal can feel like the negative side effects sometimes associated with medications.

Service providers have a role to support their clients through the quit process. If you're a service provider, ask your clients about their tobacco use and encourage reduction and cessation. Clients may need adjustments to medication, or advice from medical professionals when choosing nicotine-replacement aids.

Find out how you can support your clients to reach their quit goal. Download our **resource for people with mental health issues**, "Smoking and Your Mental Health" at winnipeg.cmha.ca or mb.lung.ca.

Resources for providers

"Mental Illness and Smoking: Key Messages for Health Care Providers and Policy Makers," available at www.can-adaptt.net

"Smoking and Mental Illness: A Guide for Health Professionals," available at www.quitnow.gov.au

"Tobacco Control in the Context of Mental Illness and Addictions: Reviewing the Evidence," available at www.heretohelp.bc.ca

General resources

Smokers' Helpline in Manitoba: A friendly trained professional quit specialist can provide guidance through the quitting process. **1-877-513-5333**

The Lung Association's *Journey to Quit* booklet available at mb.lung.ca

Canadian Cancer Society, For Smoker's Who Want to Quit: One Step at a Time, **1-866-786-3934**

For more tips on how to quit from professionals as well as other quitters, see **ManitobaQuits.ca**

You can also talk to your doctor, pharmacist or other health professional about quitting.

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