

# Kicking the habit

After explaining the problem, Patricia MacDonald offers some solutions

## What happens to your body when you quit smoking?

- after 20 minutes blood pressure drops to normal pulse rate returns to normal body temperature of hands and feet increases to normal
- after 8 hours carbon monoxide level in blood drops to normal oxygen level in blood returns to normal
- after 24 hours chance of heart attack decreases
- after 48 hours nerve endings start regrowing ability to smell and taste is enhanced
- 2 weeks to 3 months circulation improves walking becomes easier lung function increases up to 30%
- 1 to 9 months coughing, sinus congestion, fatigue, shortness of breath decrease cilia regrow in lungs, increasing ability to handle mucus, clean the lungs, reduce infection body's overall energy increase
- 1 year excess risk of coronary heart disease is half that of a smoker
- 5 years lung cancer death rate for average former smoker (one pack per day) decreases by almost half stroke risk is reduced to that of a non smoker 5-15 years after quitting risk of cancer of the mouth, throat and esophagus is half that of a smoker
- 10 years lung cancer death rate similar to that of non-smokers pre-cancerous cells are replaced risk of cancer of the mouth, throat, esophagus, bladder, kidney and pancreas decreases
- 15 years risk of coronary heart disease is that of a non-smoker

## Before you can quit, you need two things:

- 1) to make up your mind that you really want to quit.
- 2) to find out the best way to quit- Don't worry if you quit and start again. 70% of smokers who quit do start again, but studies show that most of those eventually do quit for good.

## The following are some tips from the P.E.I. Lung Association:

### 1) Determine why you smoke

- to discover what people, places, events, or moods trigger your urge to smoke.

## Examples:

- watching televisions
- talking on the phone
- party situations
- having a beer, coffee or tea
- reading a book
- playing cards
- driving in a car
- after a meal
- feeling tired, bored or fed up
- working against a deadline

In order to successfully quit smoking, you either have to avoid these situations for a while, or develop ways to replace smoking in these situations.

### 2) Determine your reasons for quitting

- write down your five most important reasons for staying off cigarettes and rank them in order of importance. Review them at least once every day.

## Some examples:

- to significantly reduce your chance of getting lung cancer, heart trouble, circulatory problems, and emphysema
- more energy especially for exercise and sports (including indoor sports)
- lower blood pressure -set a good example for kids or younger brothers and sisters
- clothes and breath won't stink
- SAVE MONEY (if you smoke a pack a day, you save \$193.20 a month and 2318.40 a year

- be more in control of your life
- breathe freely
- no more cough or phlegm

### 3) Breaking out of the habit

Decide on the substitutes that are best for you-chew gum, chew on carrots, take a shower, drink water through a straw (a straw has about the same diameter as a cigarette) brush your teeth, work out.

### 4) Reward yourself for quitting

Use common sense here. Rewards should be things you enjoy, things that are reasonably priced and things that will not produce other health problems (like drinking alcohol to excess or eating too many fattening foods). Rewards do not need to be material but they should be proportional to what you have achieved (delaying your first cigarette of the day by an hour shouldn't be rewarded with a shopping spree.)

### 5) How you can help a friend quit?

- 1) Don't bug them. They have to do this themselves.
- 2) Let them know you support them. (This means NOT offering them a cigarette)
- 3) Reward them if they do quit for a certain amount of time.
- 4) Challenge them to a bet.

For additional information, and/or help- contact the P.E.I. lung Association or the Heart and Stroke Foundation.

