

## Call the Quitline 131 848 for extra support

Quitting smoking can be a difficult thing to do, so it's a really good idea to encourage people to have more than one avenue of support.

Quitline 131 848 provides a free telephone advisory service for all stages of the quitting process. Quitters can join the Quitline 12

week program where skilled advisers provide calls throughout the quitting process. Quitline Advisors can help to:

- make a plan for quitting
- give accurate information about treatments like NRT
- provide ideas on stress management, weight gain and coping with withdrawal.

Whether or not a person succeeds in quitting smoking has a lot to do with how the people around them react to their decision.

Some people will support the quitter, others will undermine their determination to become a non-smoker.

Provide support and encouragement – criticism just makes people afraid of being judged, and less likely to try again.

**Above all, just be there.**

# Helping others to quit



# Quitline® 131 848

[www.quitsa.org.au](http://www.quitsa.org.au)



**M**ost people know the bad news about smoking: that it leads to cancer, heart disease, emphysema, etc.

Because of this, it can be difficult to watch someone you care about – whether family, friend or colleague – smoke their lives away. It can be tempting to try and pressure them into quitting.

But the bottom line is that people who smoke need to make the decision to quit because they realise that quitting will help them, not because someone else wants them to.

Nagging and constant criticism doesn't help either. Many people get defensive in an argument, and then may insist on their right to smoke.

This doesn't mean other people can't help. Getting people to talk about their smoking and whether or not they want to continue, asking questions and challenging rationalisations are all ways of moving people towards their own decision to quit. Other people are also really important sources of support and encouragement while people are quitting.

## Helping someone make the decision to quit

One of the simplest and most helpful things that you can do is help a person who smokes list what they like and don't like about smoking, and get them to talk about it. This exercise can be an eye-opener for some people, as they recognise that they often have doubts about continuing smoking themselves. For some people this is just the beginning, for others it can be the trigger that makes them decide that now is the time to quit.

There are many reasons that people give for wanting to quit smoking. They may worry about their own health, especially if they have been smoking for a long time. They may be experiencing some worrying symptoms, like a cough, or general feelings of being unwell, or someone they know has had a serious smoking related illness.

Other people are concerned about their children – they may be making a decision to start a family, they may want to be a good role model, or their children may have come home from school full of facts about smoking.

Many people eventually get to a stage where they can no longer justify the financial costs of continuing to smoke. If a person spends \$10 a day on cigarettes (less than a pack of 20/day), they watch \$70 a week, or \$3640 a year go up in smoke. You can help them talk about what they would rather do with that money.

## Reinforcing the benefits of quitting

Sometimes people can think of lots of reasons why they can't do something. Having someone point out the good things about quitting, and counteract some of the negatives, can encourage someone to give it a go.

Did you know that

- Much of the damage caused by smoking is reversible, and the sooner a person quits, the more chance their body has to repair itself.
- As soon as a person stops smoking, the body starts to recover
- the nicotine is gone after a few hours

Many people who quit smoking find it an empowering experience – they get the confidence to tackle new challenges.

## Help while someone is quitting

Once a person has decided to quit, they will need extra support and encouragement. Dealing with cravings and withdrawal symptoms can be really difficult to begin with. You may be able to suggest ways of dealing with stress and irritable feelings, or just provide a listening ear or a companion for activities.

Encourage them to remember why they wanted to quit in the first place, and to stick at it. You can also help with rewards and incentives. Be positive and believe in them, even if they slip up. Gently remind them of how far they've come – it would be a pity to throw all that effort away!

Sometimes you may not have all the answers. There are other people who can help. GPs and pharmacists can offer support – especially if the quitter is thinking about using Nicotine Replacement Therapy or Zyban.

- after a few days, the sense of smell and taste returns

- circulation improves after a couple of months (especially in the hands and feet)

- after a year, their risk of sudden death from heart attack is halved.

- Having tried to quit before increases the likelihood of success.
- Putting on some weight while quitting is common, and can be managed with a good diet and some exercise.

