

GEARING UP FOR A SMOKE FREE FATHER'S DAY

Luke and David (not their real names) are brothers who want to stop smoking for Father's Day this year. Both have small children and their partners have been encouraging them to quit for some time.

"I told my wife I'd stop smoking when my oldest was born, but that was three years ago and I'm no closer to it," said David who works at a camp in Northern B.C. "When I'm at work the days are so long I just can't seem to think about quitting." He also finds it hard that there are so many smokers among his co-workers in camp. "Everybody seems to smoke up there."

David's observation isn't surprising. In fact, smoking rates among construction workers (34 per cent) are more than double the provincial average of 16 per cent. Furthermore, this population tends to smoke more heavily so they may find quitting more difficult.

David's brother Luke is a carpenter and also works with several smokers. Despite this challenge, he is resolved to make a change this year as he wants to model a smoke free lifestyle for his two sons.

The brothers are counting on a bit of old fashioned sibling rivalry to help them meet their goal. "We've got a little competition going," said Luke. "June 1st is our quit date. On Father's Day, June 21st, we are having a big BBQ with our families. Hopefully we're both still smoke free, but if one of us is smoking again, he has to buy the steaks!"

Luckily there are some new supports for men and fathers in B.C. who want to stop using tobacco. The Quit-Now Men website <http://men.quitnow.ca/> and Dads in Gear <http://dadsingear.ok.ubc.ca/> are notable additions to the quit-smoking toolbox. Both projects were developed by UBC research teams and the B.C. Lung Association was also involved in creating QuitNow Men. The resources have a strong focus on men's health. Videos, forums and stories from real men provide inspiration while practical resources (like how to get free patches or gum) help with the fundamentals of quitting.

Luke and David have some great reasons for saying good-bye to tobacco. With support from these new websites and their families, their Father's Day BBQ is shaping up to be a celebration of their smoke free success.