

## Quitting Smoking – The healthy choice isn't always an easy choice

We all know that smoking is bad for you. Tobacco kills more people than alcohol and all other illegal drugs combined. Given its prominence as a major killer and the fact that 70 per cent of smokers say they want to quit smoking in the next six months, why is it that so many people struggle to stay smoke free?

Well, in many ways the healthy choice isn't always an easy choice. Unlike other addictive drugs, tobacco can be easily accessed at every corner store and it is used openly in many outdoor public spaces.

Often people who are trying to quit using an addictive drug find that exercise (such as a brisk walk) and participating in activities with friends can help dramatically. However, some smokers find that these tasks are more challenging than they initially thought.

Triggers and temptation can be everywhere and that makes it harder to quit. Plotting out a walking path might mean trying to avoid passing by stores that sell tobacco or public places where smoking is permitted. Even going to the local hockey game or visiting a hospital or community clinic might mean having to walk through a wall of smoke to get into the building.

Smoking is everywhere and that can be very challenging for people who are trying to quit. Treating tobacco like other addictive drugs can reduce the number of people dying from its use. Research has shown that smoke free environments and bylaws help smokers quit. They also send a clear message that we take addiction seriously.

Our communities can play an important role in helping smokers quit and live healthier and longer lives by adopting smoke free bylaws and promoting smoke free environments for residents. To learn more about smoke free environments visit: <https://www.interiorhealth.ca/sites/Partners/TobaccoResources/Documents/Smoke%20Free%20Bylaws%20Factsheet.pdf>

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