

Healthy Workplace

Helping Your Employees Become Smoke-Free

Everyday 44 Ontarians die of tobacco-related illnesses (Illing & Kaiserman, 2004). Approximately 70% of all smokers want to quit smoking (CDC, 2002) and over half of these smokers are thinking about quitting in the next six months (CTUMS, 2005). Research shows people are more likely to stop smoking if they work in smoke-free environments (Joseph, 2005). In addition to improving the health of their employees, workplaces that offer supportive and smoke-free work environments have been shown to be more

productive. Research has indicated that, when compared to smokers, non-smokers take fewer sick days, use fewer health care resources, and are overall more productive in their jobs (Fiore, Hatsukami, & Baker, 2002; Halpern, Shikiar, Rentz et al, 2001; Robbins, Fonseca, Chao et al, 2000). Tobacco-related illness and disease are a significant strain on the Ontario economy resulting in productivity losses of \$6.8 billion annually (Single, 1996). This newsletter contains a menu of tobacco-related activities that have been developed to assist your workplace in creating a work environment that fosters smoke-free living. These activities have been tailored to workplaces and are based on workplace needs and challenges.

Workplaces are encouraged to utilize these suggestions to support employees who smoke and want to quit. For more information, call your local Public Health Unit.



Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT)

“Quitting smoking is easy. I’ve done it a thousand times” ...

Mark Twain

Background

Tobacco use still prevails as the leading cause of morbidity and mortality. Offering Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT) is a cost-effective option to assist those interested in quitting smoking. Smoking cessation interventions offer health benefits that reduce the risk of cardiac death, lung cancer, and stroke, and increase life expectancy which implies long-term savings to the workplace and longevity for smokers.

Currently, most private health insurance companies do not provide coverage for NRT products. This is because once the government makes a product available over-the-counter it is de-listed from health insurance plans. In the United States “pharmacological treatments are rarely covered as a preventative therapy” (Schauffler et al, 1993, p.188). Rather, these treatments are only covered if someone is medically diagnosed with a smoking-related condition. NRT products are effective and should be made available to smokers who need it the most (see table on Quit Smoking medications).

Why people smoke?

Nicotine is as addictive as heroin or cocaine, which is why the majority of smokers “persist in tobacco use for many years and typically cycle through multiple periods of relapse and remission” compared to the fraction of those who can maintain permanent quitting status on their own (Fiore, Bailey, Cohen, et al, 2000).

Why support coverage of NRT?

- NRT products lead to a “near doubling of cessation rates”, when compared to non-pharmacological interventions (Molyneux, 2004, p.454).

- Investing in tobacco cessation treatments translates to “lower health care expenditures, workplace absenteeism, insurance costs and improves productivity” (McDonald, 2005, p.11).
- Approximately half of current smokers in Ontario want to quit smoking in the next 6 months (CTUMS, 2005).
- Companies such as the Union Pacific Railroad in the U.S. that have offered NRT products to their employees observed a 15% reduction in smoking prevalence in a 7-year period (U.S. Department of Health and Human Service; CDC, 2003).

Additional Cessation Resources

The following is a brief list of cessation resources that are available online or for order.

1. How Not to Smoke: A help book for women who want to quit smoking (video and booklet)

This video was developed by Council for Tobacco-free Metro Toronto to assist smokers in quitting smoking. This resource contains a 26 minute video that contains eight parts and an activity booklet that can be used with the video. The video helps smokers understand why they smoke, create a plan to quit, secure a quit date, and explains how to avoid triggers to continue smoking.

This resource can be ordered by calling the Canadian Public Health Association, Health Resources Centre at (613) 725-3769, Ext. 190 (cost: \$24.95).

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Cessation Resources

Additional Cessation Resources

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2. Quit: You have it in you (Brochure)

This brochure was created by the Ministry of Health Promotion with eight tips to make quitting smoking easier. The tips include making a list, understanding why you smoke, finding a healthier substitute for smoking, changing your environment and routine, talking to someone, learning from the past, setting a quit date, and motivating yourself with positive thoughts. This resource also explains different methods on how to cope with withdrawal when you quit smoking.

This brochure is available free of charge from your local Public Health Unit, or online at:
http://www.mhp.gov.on.ca/english/health/smoke_free/quitbrochure-EN.pdf.

3. Thinking about quitting? Smokers' Helpline can help (Brochures and Posters)

Smokers' Helpline is a free, confidential, telephone-based service that provides personalized support, advice, and information about quitting smoking. The services offered include assistance in helping create a quit plan, coping with cravings, quitting methods, withdrawal symptoms, managing stress, dealing with slips and relapses, and strategies on how to reach your goal. The Smokers' Helpline service is available seven days a week from anywhere in Ontario by calling toll-free: 1-877-513-5333. Another resource is Smokers' Helpline Online (www.smokershelpline.ca)

which is an interactive web-based service with support groups, personalized feedback, instant messenger service and inspirational email support.

4. Make your home and car smoke-free: A guide to protecting your family from second-hand smoke (Booklet)

This booklet is a guide to help families understand how to remove second-hand smoke from their homes and cars. Second-hand smoke is harmful to the health of children and infants and is unsafe at any level. This guide provides practical tips on how you can eliminate the harms caused by breathing in second-hand smoke in your home and car.

This brochure is available free of charge from your local Public Health Unit, or online at:
http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hl-vs/pubs/tobac-tabac/second-guide/index_e.html.

5. On the road to quitting: Guide to becoming a non-smoker (Booklet)

This guide contains a series of steps to help you in preparing to quit smoking. It allows you to work at your own pace while thinking about strategies to create a realistic plan to quit based on your goals. The booklet provides information on how quitting will improve your health by reducing the risks of developing heart disease, cancer, and breathing problems.

This resource is available online at
http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hl-vs/tobac-tabac/quit-cesser/nou-maintenant/road-voie/index_e.html.

Challenge your workplace to review these activities and implement them in order to support employees!

Activity for employers	Description	Resources
<p>Revise or create a comprehensive Smoke Free Policy in the workplace.</p>	<p>The Smoke Free Ontario (SFO) Act bans smoking in enclosed workplaces and workplace vehicles. You can increase employee and customer protection from second hand smoke by prohibiting smoking within a specified distance from doors, windows and intake vents or banning smoking on all workplace property. A written tobacco control policy, supported by a well informed and accepting staff, will lead to greater compliance and a healthier place to work.</p>	<p>Sample policies are available from the Health Canada resource "Towards a Healthier Workplace: A Guidebook on Tobacco Control Policies", which can be found at: http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hl-vs/pubs/tobac-tabac/work-trav/samples-echantillons_e.html</p>
<p>Find a Quitting Champion from your workplace who would be interested in writing an article for the workplace newsletter.</p>	<p>Ask him/her to describe the reasons for deciding to quit, the difficulties and encouragements along the way, and life after cigarettes. Reading an account by someone who has "been there" will show smokers that quitting is possible and encourage them to persevere.</p>	<p>Employee(s) who have quit smoking. Contact your local Public Health Unit or Smokers' Helpline. (Contact information is available at the end of this newsletter)</p>
<p>Lunch 'n' Learn</p>	<p>Have a guest speaker on smoking cessation. Provide a nutritious lunch to encourage employees to attend. Participants may be able to provide support to each other after the session ends.</p>	<p>Practical, relevant material on smoking cessation. Stress balls, magnets and other promotional items are available for distribution at the presentation. Contact your local Public Health Unit or Smokers' Helpline.</p>
<p>Investigate coverage for smoking cessation aids/ health plan benefits</p>	<p>Inform and/or ensure that the workplace benefit package includes coverage or subsidization for Nicotine Replacement Therapy and other smoking cessation medications. People are more likely to quit if they use a combination of quit smoking medication, self-help materials and counselling or group programs.</p>	<p>Refer to the table on quit smoking medications, highlighting information on the costs and benefits of various forms of Nicotine Replacement Therapies (NRT) and other quit smoking medications.</p>

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Activity for employers	Description	Resources
Offer on-site group support	Contract an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) that offers smoking cessation as part of their plan.	Contact your local Public Health Unit.
Review Workplace Cessation Resource Guide by Health Canada and implement as appropriate.	Resource entitled "Smoking Cessation in the Workplace: A guide to helping your employees quit smoking".	Resource is available at: http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hl-vs/pubs/tobac-tabac/cessation-renoncement/index_e.html
Assemble and distribute Quit Kits for employees	Fill a Ziploc bag with things to help smokers deal with cravings such as a stress ball, pen, note pad, sugarless gum/mints, water bottles, straws/ toothpicks, Smokers' Helpline cards, list of local cessation supports, etc.	Contact your local Public Health Unit for items to include in a Quit Kit and the rationale behind these items. Contact Smokers' Helpline for Smokers' Helpline cards.
Organize a Quit Challenge	Host a workplace smoking cessation event that encourages employees to quit smoking for a specified period of time (a day or a month, for example). Offer activities and healthy snacks to replace "smoke break times". Encourage people who smoke to trade their cigarettes for a healthy coping strategy. Non-smokers can become "Quit Buddies" by supporting smokers through the quitting process and are also eligible to win prizes.	Contact Smokers' Helpline.
Offer Self-help resources	Provide self-help materials for employees. Make these resources available in key workplace locations such as lunchrooms, cafeterias, lounges, locker rooms, health centers, and other high traffic areas. Promote Smokers' Helpline and Smokers' Helpline Online to smokers and those supporting smokers. Employees can access self-help materials from Smokers' Helpline and Smokers' Helpline Online.	Contact your local Public Health Unit, which may have local resources to access. Contact Smokers' Helpline More resources are available at the Heather Crowe Resource Center: http://www.cctc.ca/cctc/EN/hcrc



Quit Smoking Medications

Medication	Usual Instructions	Cost	Advantages
NRT Gum	<p>2mg for people smoking less than 25 cigarettes/day</p> <p>4mg for people smoking 25 or more cigarettes/day</p> <p>Generally the gum should be used for up to 12 weeks with no more than 24 pieces/day</p> <p>4mg also for people smoking more than 15 cigarettes/day & smoking within 30 min of waking; as well as those who failed to quit on 2mg dose</p>	<p>Pkg of 105 pieces costs \$40.00 (about \$3-4.50/day if using 8-12 pieces/day)</p>	<p>Least expensive form of NRT</p> <p>May delay weight gain</p>
NRT Patch	<p>21mg/24 hr – 4 weeks</p> <p>14mg/24hr – 2 weeks</p> <p>7mg/24hr – 2 weeks</p> <p>Lower patch dose may be used for people smoking less than 10 cigarettes /day <u>or</u> who weigh less than 100 lbs</p>	<p>\$35.00 for a pkg of 7 patches (\$5.00/day)</p>	<p>Easy to use</p> <p>Less conspicuous than other forms of NRT</p>
NRT Inhaler	<p>A dose from the nicotine inhaler = 1 puff. Each cartridge delivers 4mg of nicotine over 80 puffs</p> <p>Recommended dosage is 6-16 cartridges/day. Recommended duration of therapy is up to 6 months. Dosage is tapered during the final 3 months of treatment</p>	<p>Pkg of 30 cartridges costs \$30.00 (Daily cost can range from \$6-16 depending on # of cartridges used \$1.00/cartridge)</p>	<p>Addresses both physical and behavioural dependency</p>
Bupropion SR Prescribed by doctor	<p>1-2 weeks before quit date, people begin with a dose of 150mg each AM for 3 days, then increase to 150mg twice a day for 7-12 weeks following the quit date.</p>	<p>60 tablets costs \$73.00 (\$2.45 daily if taking twice a day)</p>	<p>Long-term use may decrease weight gain</p>
Champix™ (Varenicline Tartrate) Prescribed by doctor	<p>Recommended course of therapy is 12 weeks.</p> <p>Dosing regimen: First 2 weeks Days 1-3: 0.5 mg tablet once daily Days 4-7: 0.5 mg tablet twice daily Days 8-14: 1mg tablet twice daily</p> <p>Following 10 weeks Week 3 – Week 12: 1mg tablet twice daily</p>	<p>\$3.37/day</p>	<p>Specifically designed for smoking cessation</p>

Consult your doctor and/or pharmacist before using these medications.

Source: US Department of Health and Human Services (2000). Clinical Practice Guideline: Treating Tobacco Use and Dependence, Product Information Package (Champix) from Pfizer

¹Cost information was collected by calling Canadian pharmacies for more information.



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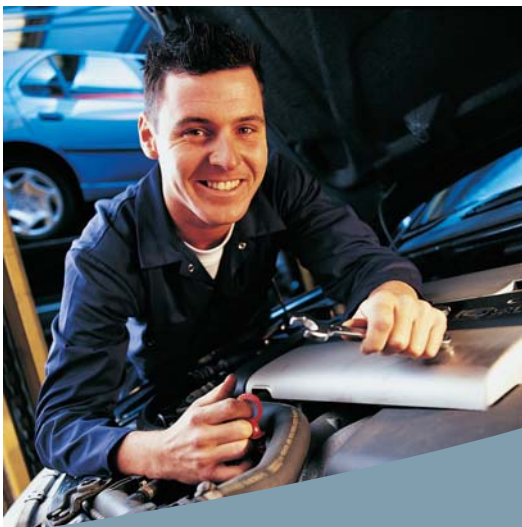
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Need more information??

Local Contacts:

Your local Public Health Unit

Region of Waterloo Public Health
Lifestyle Resources - Tobacco Program
www.region.waterloo.on.ca/ph

Project Health
www.projecthealth.ca

Tobacco Information Line
519-883-2279



Local Smokers' Helpline Office

Monica Bennett
Regional Coordinator, Smokers' Helpline
905-387-4322 ext. 644 or mbennett@ontario.cancer.ca

