

Tips for Helping A Friend or Colleague Quit Smoking

It can be hard watching a friend or colleague continue to smoke despite the associated health risks. Remember that it's important to be supportive and non-judgmental.

DO:

- Understand that your friend/colleague has an addiction and it may be extremely difficult for them to stop smoking
- Respect that they can only quit when they feel ready
- Ask them what you can do to help make quitting easier for them
- Put together a smoke-free “quit kit” with some items to help manage cravings, such as chewing gum, a stress ball and a reusable straw
- Encourage them to avoid possible triggers, such as drinking coffee or alcohol
- Provide a distraction when they are craving a cigarette, e.g. by having a text conversation, making dinner together, or going to the movies
- Let your friend or colleague know about possible quit aids, like nicotine replacement therapy, Zyban/Champix, or quit coaches which they can discuss with their doctors
- Be patient – your friend/colleague may become irritable due to nicotine withdrawal
- Celebrate each small victory alongside your friend or colleague!

DON'T:

- Assume that quitting will be easy for your friend/colleague
- Provide advice if your friend or colleague doesn't want it
- Criticize them if they slip up and have a cigarette – many ex-smokers try quitting multiple times before they finally succeed
- Lecture them about why smoking is bad – they may become less likely to turn to you for help
- Smoke around your friend/colleague

For more resources on how to help, check out:

- www.leavethepackbehind.org (online booklet for friends of smokers)
- www.smokershelpline.ca