

Tackling Tobacco

Quitting smoking improves mental health

Quitting smoking will support your mental health recovery long term

Quitting smoking is not harmful to mental health recovery. Rather, quitting smoking will improve your mental health, mood and quality of life!

You may feel stronger nicotine withdrawal symptoms within the first two weeks of giving up smoking. Give yourself the best chance of success by calling Quitline and using NRT.

Using NRT can help to relieve feelings of stress, restlessness or irritability. Using NRT products will also help reduce your anxiety related to cravings.

Cutting down to quit

This approach to quitting means gradually reducing the number of cigarettes you smoke over time until you have quit completely. You can also focus on changing up habits e.g. no longer smoking after a meal. To increase your chances of success using the cut down to quit approach you can:

- set a quit date within 2 to 6 weeks of starting to cut down
- use NRT or other stop smoking medications to combat cravings and withdrawal symptoms
- get support from your support worker, health professional or Quitline counsellor throughout the cut down to quit period

It is important to remember that cutting down without quitting does not lead to any health benefits. This is because your body compensates by adjusting the way you smoke to get the same level of nicotine, such as:

- puffing more frequently,
- inhaling more deeply, and
- smoking right down to the butt.

There is no safe level of smoking and even light smoking poses risks to health.

Choose your personal 'why' for quitting smoking:



- lowering my levels of anxiety, depression and stress



- increasing my quality of life and positive mood



- improving my sleep



- improving my body's ability to get nutrients from food



- improving my fitness and energy levels



- saving money



- supporting my long term recovery



- potentially reducing the dosage of some mental health medicines

"Talking about quitting smoking gives me hope"

Consumer with lived experience

Medications

Continuing to smoke means you may need higher doses of some antipsychotic or antidepressant medicines, because smoking interferes with the way these medicines work.

Some medications may need monitoring if you plan to cut down or quit smoking. It's important you work with your health professional for advice and support around managing medications while quitting.



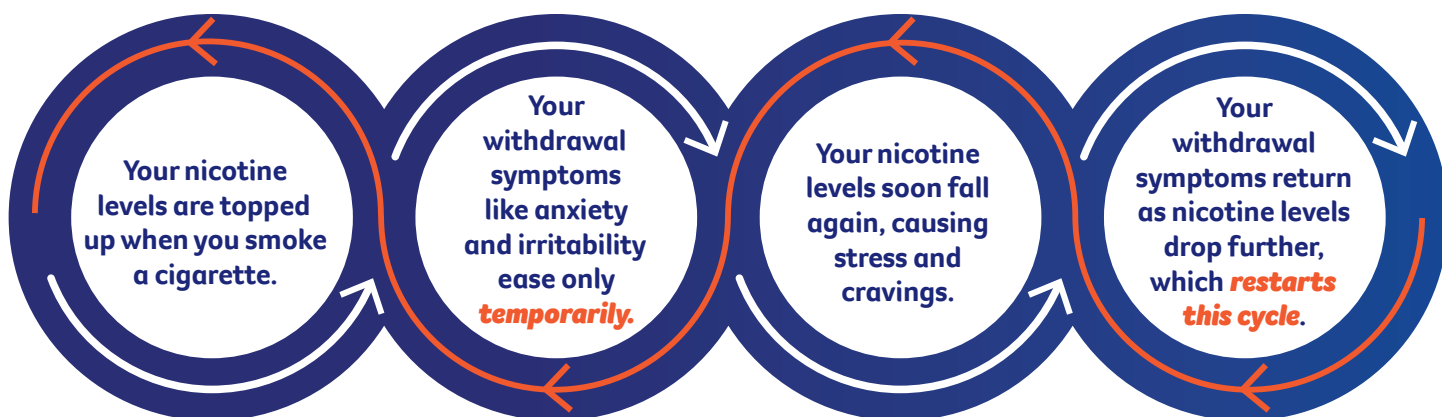
Aboriginal Respect Symbol. Designed by
Marcus Lee Design for Cancer Council NSW.



Cancer Council
Tackling Tobacco

How can I manage my stress without smoking?

Smoking increases stress. People who quit smoking have lower stress levels in the long-term. Talk to your support worker, health professional or a Quitline counsellor who can give you practical strategies to help manage your stress as well as other things to do to replace smoking.



Where can I go for support to quit?

Talk to your support worker or health professional



- Ask them about quitting smoking and what support is available
- They can talk you through what the quitting process will feel like, common challenges and practical strategies

Call NSW Quitline on 13 7848



- Free, confidential counselling service for people who smoke or vape
- Has counsellors who are mental health professionals
- Has Aboriginal counsellors and counsellors who speak Arabic, Cantonese, Mandarin and Vietnamese
- Will help you build a quit plan, discuss medications and connect you to other resources to help you quit
- Anyone can call NSW Quitline, even if you aren't ready to quit just yet

Use Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT)



- You can get nicotine patches at a cheaper price through a prescription from a doctor if you have a concession card
- You can buy nicotine gum, lozenges, inhalators and mouth spray over the counter and from pharmacies

Ask about quit smoking medications



- You can get these medications through a prescription from a doctor

Both NRT and quit smoking medications are safe for most people with lived experience of mental illness.



Our **Tackling Tobacco** team are here to help. To speak to a member of our team, call **02 9334 1911** or email us at tacklingtobacco@nswcc.org.au.
Alternatively, visit our [website](#) for further information on the Tackling Tobacco program.