Do you know a smoker who wants to quit?

Smoking is a powerful addiction for many and quitting may be difficult. Supporting someone while they quit is not easy. People who smoke must decide for themselves that they want to quit, for their own reasons and in their own time.

To help make the quitting process easier, be sensitive to the moods and needs of the person trying to quit. Pressure from friends or family rarely works.

To learn more, visit: www.cancer.ca

How do I quit smoking?

Quitting smoking may not be easy for some people. Like anything in life, it takes preparation, skills and practice. Preparing to quit and taking the time to develop the skills needed to remain smoke-free are very important parts of quitting.

About half of Canadians who have ever smoked have already quit successfully. It is possible. The important thing is not to become discouraged.

To learn more, visit: www.cancer.ca

The best thing you can do for your eye health is to quit smoking or not to start in the first place.

Talk to your optometrist.

Smoking and Vision Loss

Do you know a smoker who wants to quit?

Need help to quit smoking?

Talk to your optometrist about how smoking is affecting your vision and how to get help quitting. The following resources are also available:

Smokers' Helpline is proven to help you quit successfully. It is free, confidential, personal and non-judgmental. Call toll-free: 1-866-366-3667 from anywhere in Canada or visit www.smokershelpline.ca

The Canadian Cancer Society’s One Step at a Time Guides recognize that quitting isn’t just one step — it’s a process that happens in stages. Visit www.cancer.ca

Health Canada’s On the Road to Quitting: A Guide to becoming a non-smoker helps you to prepare and take action to successfully stop smoking at your own pace. Visit www.gosmokefree.gc.ca

You can quit smoking. Your optometrist can help.
Smoking and your eye health

The impact of smoking on vision is often overlooked or even unknown by many, and the outcomes are serious. Smoking can lead to blindness, which affects one’s quality of life, including driving, reading, walking and recognizing people’s faces.

Tobacco smoke is made up of over 4,000 chemicals. Several of these are poisonous to the tissues of the eye. Some reduce the level of oxygen in the blood as well as the blood flow in the eye.

Chemicals in tobacco smoke can cause damage through oxidative stress, a process that damages proteins and lipids and reduces the levels of protective antioxidants. The eye is particularly vulnerable to oxidative stress.

Smoking-related eye diseases

Age-related macular degeneration (AMD)
AMD is a chronic disease causing vision loss or blindness.
» Smokers are two to three times more likely to develop AMD than people who never smoked.
» The best way to reduce the risk for AMD is NOT to smoke.

Cataract
Cataract is a clouding of the lens of the eye causing blurred vision.
» Individuals who smoke a pack a day have twice the risk of non-smokers for developing cataracts.

Thyroid-associated eye disease
» In some people, smoking increases the risk of developing complications of the eye associated with this disease.
» Symptoms include bulging of the eyeballs, double vision, optic nerve disease, inflammation and swelling of the eyes.
» Smokers with this disease tend to experience worse symptoms than non-smokers.

Other smoking effects

Strabismus occurs when both eyes do not point at the same object. Pregnant women who smoke increase their infant’s risk of strabismus by 6.5 times.

Ocular Surface Disorders (OSD) are a group of diseases in which the front surfaces of the eyes are damaged. Smoking has been linked to an increase in OSD.

Second-hand Smoke

Second-hand smoke is damaging to the eyes of non-smokers
» Second-hand smoke causes many symptoms including stinging eyes, burning or pricking sensations, watery eyes and redness.
» Children are at increased risk of getting allergic conjunctivitis, an inflammation of the eyelid tissue due to allergy-causing substances such as tobacco smoke.
» Contact lens wearers who smoke or are exposed to second-hand smoke are at risk of developing corneal infections and inflammations.

Benefits Of Quitting

Stopping smoking and avoiding second-hand smoke are important in maintaining eye health.
» Quitting smoking immediately removes a major source of stress from the body and within weeks the blood and vascular health improves.
» While some of the effects of smoking are reversible, it does cause gradual and permanent damage. The earlier smokers quit, the better for their eye health as well as overall health.