

Cessation **Strategies**

COLD TURKEY

- Cold turkey—quitting on their own—works best when youth have a plan.
- Suggest youth friendly strategies such as Kids Help Line that offers text and chat support; Digital Tools – Quash app; In-person or Virtual Programs for Youth – CAMH Youth VAST

SOCIAL CONTRACTS

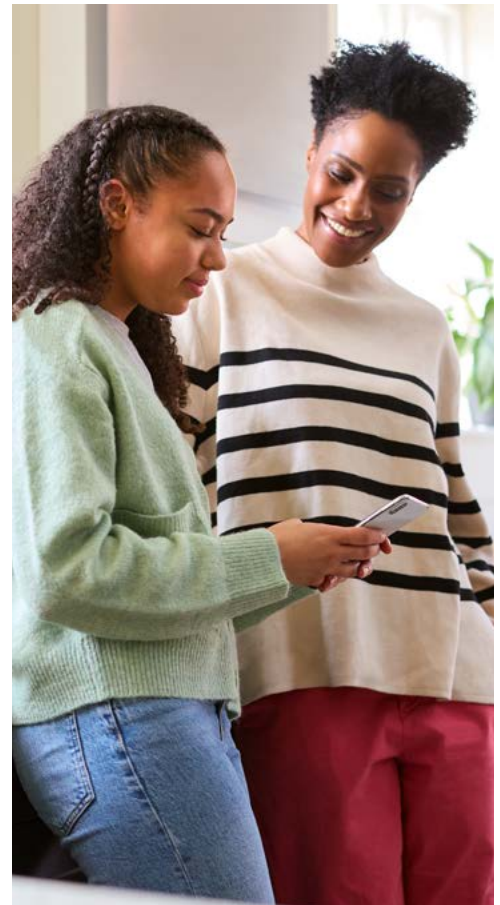
- Identify a friend who smokes/vapes to quit with them; and,
 - Tell their friends who smoke/vape that they are trying to quit and to not smoke around them.
 - Ask their friends to keep them distracted and send them positive texts.

A QUIT LINE

- Offer free practical tools, proven strategies, and personalized support.
- Visit Ontario Health811 1-866-797-0007 or visit <https://health811.ontario.ca/static/guest/home>
- Choose the online programs, text support, or phone services you want.

SPEAK TO A HEALTH PROFESSIONAL

- Refer youth to a nurse, doctor, or pharmacist about their quit plan.
- Talk about:
 - What happened the last time they tried to quit
 - What they plan to do this time
 - Whether nicotine replacement products or prescription medications might help.



Understanding Cravings vs Withdrawals

WITHDRAWAL

After smoking/vaping for a while, the body becomes accustomed to having nicotine on board and continues to adapt to this 'new normal' so that tolerance may develop (meaning more nicotine is needed to get the same effect). When nicotine is not being delivered to the body, physiological withdrawal occurs. Typical nicotine withdrawal symptoms include headache, shaking, irritability, moodiness, insomnia, constipation, and coughing. The symptoms of withdrawal can be strong during the first few days after quitting, but they are temporary and fade (after 2-4 weeks) as the body adjusts to the lack of nicotine.

CRAVINGS

After quitting, some who smoke/vape experience nicotine cravings. These are intense urges to smoke/vape. They can be very hard to ignore and resist. Some who smoke experience frequent cravings that happen one after another. Cravings can last long after the withdrawal period, especially if environmental cues that were once associated with smoking or vaping are encountered. However, as time passes, cravings become further apart, and get weaker. Nicotine replacement products are designed to reduce the frequency and strength of cravings, but due to insufficient results they seem to be less effective for teens than adults.

CREATING A QUIT PLAN

Quitting is not easy. There are ups and downs and some days are harder than others. One of the main reasons youth don't always succeed is that they didn't spend the time planning for how they were going to achieve their quit goal and handle any challenges that may come with quitting. A quit plan is a youth's armour when they are quitting. Having a good plan is central to the quit process. It makes quitting easier and can improve the chances of quitting for good. Planning helps youth learn a bit more about themselves, line up the support they need, and keeps them motivated.

The Quash app is a mobile cessation app that walks youth through creating a quit plan, much like the following:

Identify their "why"

Everyone has a different reason they want to quit. It's essential for youth to be able to identify why they are quitting so they can remind themselves throughout the process.

Make a commitment/write down a goal

When people make a commitment, they are more likely to follow through with it if they write it down/type a note in their phone, instead of just thinking it. That commitment gets even stronger when youth tell someone about that commitment. If you have a trusting relationship with the youth you are working with, set the goal or commitment with them.

Get Support

Youth are the expert in their own life, but that doesn't mean they should go through it alone. Getting support might be the most important part of their plan. Social support is strongly linked with helping people quit and avoiding slips. We know that sometimes youth hide their smoking/vaping status, making it difficult to ask for help. From experience, we find that people feel better once they are honest and transparent and they tell somebody about their use and that they are quitting. Have youth identify allies and support in their life that they can lean on during their quit journey.

Identify Strengths

A strength is something that makes you feel strong. A strength is not just something that you are good at that's a skill. A strength is something you do well and that gets you excited. Youth should lean on their strengths and remind themselves of what makes them feel strong. Youth should identify strengths that will assist them in their quit journey.

- What am I doing or talking about when I seem most energised and happy?
- When I seem my best, the exact thing I am doing is _____.
- What are your three favorite qualities you see in me? (Do your best to use one word per quality.)

Create New Routines

Small changes to a daily routine can help youth create new healthy habits and a new routine during their quit process. New routines and healthy habits can help youth focus on healthy habits rather than their cravings. Youth should create an action plan for how they will achieve both their quit and healthy habit goals. Examples of healthy habits to add to daily routine:

- Drink a glass of water first thing in the morning
- Make your bed
- Say some positive words to yourself out loud
- Post some inspiring or uplifting content on your socials
- Do a random act of kindness
- Look at your motivation photo for 30 seconds or more
- Declutter your space
- Try a new healthy habit and track your progress in the Quash app
- Stretch or do some gentle yoga poses
- Volunteer
- Go on a hike or walk in nature
- Text your quit buddy or someone who supports you
- Listen to a podcast, audiobook or read a few pages of a book

Be Aware of Triggers

Triggers are factors that make youth want to smoke or vape and will be different for each person. When youth understand the things that trigger them to want to smoke/vape, it will help them have a plan to resist. Triggers can be everyday tasks, feelings, people, places, or events. When working with youth, ask them questions such as:

- “What made you start smoking and/or vaping?”
- “What things makes you want to smoke and/or vape during the day?”
- “How do you feel when you want to smoke and/or vape?”

Keep Track of Cravings

It's important for youth to understand what cravings are to be able to identify them when they happen and how to curb them in a healthy manner. Triggers can contribute to cravings. Youth can keep track of their cravings by logging:

- Time and place
- How intense the craving is
- How are they feeling in the moment
- Were they alone or in a group

By logging cravings, youth can understand behaviours and patterns in their routines that might trigger cravings. Youth can leverage their healthy habits to help distract them with a healthier alternative from their craving in the moment. Tips to help youth get through a craving:

- Connect: Call or text a support that was identified in their quit plan.
Youth can also reach out to a help line to assist them in getting by a craving.
- Move: Fight cravings with exercise! Even short bouts of exercise can reduce cravings.
- Breathe: Controlled deep breathing can assist with cravings by taking slow deep breaths by the count of 4 (breathe in for 4, hold for 4, breathe out for 4, hold for 4 – repeat 3 times).
- Music: Create a “cravings” playlist with feel good music to distract you from your craving.
- Play: Download a free game on a mobile device to play when a craving hit – the brain will be distracted by the game.
- Eat or drink: Cravings can appear when someone is dehydrated or hungry.
Youth can curb a craving by drinking water or having a small snack.

What happens if they slip up?

It is vital to increase teens' self-efficacy for quitting smoking/vaping by:

- Supporting them to build skills;
- Focusing their attention on the small, progressive successes they achieve; and
- Encouraging them to acknowledge and take pride in these successes.

It is counterproductive to define slips and relapses as “setbacks” or “failures.” Slips and relapses should be reframed as learnings in much the same way that initial inability to achieve the next level in gaming videos is regarded as a perfectly normal, totally expected occurrence, never as a reason to abandon the game.

It's important to remain supportive and non-judgmental with youth and encourage them not to give up on their quit journey. Remind them of why they wanted to quit in their first place. Walk them through their quit plan again.

Quit Plan **Template**

PROMPTS	(write your responses below)
IDENTIFY THEIR "WHY"	
MAKE A COMMITMENT Write down a goal.	
GET SUPPORT Who can they can lean on during their quit journey?	
IDENTIFY STRENGTHS What am I doing or talking about when I seem most energised and happy? When I seem my best, the exact thing I am doing is ----- What are your three favorite qualities you see in me? (Do your best to use one word per quality.)	
CREATE NEW ROUTINES List a couple new routines and healthy habits that can help youth focus on healthy habits rather than their cravings.	
BE AWARE OF TRIGGERS "What made you start smoking and/or vaping?" "What things makes you want to smoke and/or vape during the day?" "How do you feel when you want to smoke and/or vape?"	
KEEP TRACK OF CRAVINGS Track cravings by logging: Time and place How intense the craving is How are they feeling in the moment Were they alone or in a group	