



# BE THE MATE THEY NEED

Helping colleagues [Quit@work](#)

# MAKE A TIME TO TALK

Talking to your colleague about why they want to stop smoking and offering some basic advice is a favour that could last them a lifetime. Here are some of the main things to cover:

## FIND OUT WHY YOUR COLLEAGUE WANTS TO QUIT SMOKING

Being really clear about the reasons why they want to quit smoking helps people stay committed. Do they want to:

**Be** healthier?

**Be** better off financially?

**Be** a good example for their kids?

Or something else?

Let them know that quitting smoking is a great choice! Here are some of the benefits:

**AFTER**

### **8 HOURS**

Nicotine starts to leave your body. Your blood oxygen levels, heart rate and blood pressure start to get back to normal.

### **24 HOURS**

The level of carbon monoxide in your blood drops dramatically.

### **3-5 DAYS**

Your sense of taste and smell improves and you feel and sleep better. Your clothes, hair and breath smell fresher.

### **2 MONTHS**

Your lungs stop producing extra phlegm. Your blood pressure goes back to normal and your blood circulation improves – especially to your hands and feet.

### **1 YEAR**

Your risk of dying from coronary heart disease is halved.

### **5 YEARS**

Your risk of cancer of the mouth, throat and windpipe is halved.

# HELP MAKE A PLAN

Smokers who have a plan before they quit are more likely to succeed than those who don't. Here are some things you can discuss to help make a plan for quitting.

## Help your colleague understand the different parts of the smoking addiction

**Addiction to nicotine:** Nicotine is one of thousands of chemicals in cigarettes. It causes most of the withdrawal symptoms you feel when you first stop.

**Habits:** You can train yourself so well you believe you can't do some things without a cigarette, such as taking a smoko break, driving or drinking alcohol.

**Feelings:** Smoking is often connected with moods or feelings – such as smoking when you are stressed or angry, or even when you are happy and want to celebrate.

## Work out their triggers for smoking and ideas for how to deal with them. You could ask:

- What kinds of situations stop you from quitting?
- What are the things that make you keep smoking?
- What will be the hardest situations to deal with while you are quitting?
- What would make it easier to resist the craving to smoke?

**Examples:** If you always smoke when you're in the car you could try taking a different route for a while.

If you always have a cigarette first thing in the morning, try jumping in the shower straight away or going out for a walk instead.

## What to do if you're craving a cigarette

Tell your colleague about the 4Ds to help beat the urge to smoke.

**Delay:** Don't open a pack or light a cigarette. Remind yourself that you are a non-smoker. After five minutes the urge to smoke weakens and your determination to quit will come back.

**Deep breathe:** Take a long, slow breath in, breathe out slowly again. Do this 3 times. With each breath repeat to yourself, 'I am now a non-smoker'. This gives your mind time to catch up with your feelings, stopping you acting on thoughts like 'I'm stressed, I need a smoke'.

**Drink water:** Sip it slowly. You can use a sipper bottle or a glass with a straw (this mimics the act of smoking). Hold it in your mouth and savour the taste.

**Do something else:** Take your mind off smoking by taking action – put on some music, go for a walk or ring a friend. Think about other ways you can keep your hands busy.

## SET A QUIT DATE

Encourage them to set a date to quit. This could be in a few days or a few weeks, but it's important that it's a day when they will not be under too much pressure but will have plenty to occupy themselves.

Before the quit date, encourage them to be clear about why they want to quit – come up with a plan to deal with cravings, and get some nicotine patches, gum or lozenges.

**After you've had this talk check in with your colleague to see how they're getting on.**

This could be by asking them how many days they've been smoke free whenever you see them around work or making a time to sit down for a chat in a week or two.

### Slip-ups

If your colleague has had a slip-up, such as having a smoke when they're out one night, let them know this is normal and not a sign of failure. Reinforce that they should stay strong and keep trying to quit.

# LET THEM KNOW ABOUT THE QUIT GROUP'S FREE SERVICES

- **The Quitline 0800 778 778** offers free advice, support and quit smoking plans.
- **The website** [www.quit.org.nz](http://www.quit.org.nz) is packed with info and includes a calculator that allows smokers to work out how much money they will save by quitting.  
The website hosts a blog community where people giving up smoking can share their stories, tips and encourage each other.
- **Txt2Quit** provides support and encouragement to people quitting smoking via text messages. Sign up at [www.quit.org.nz](http://www.quit.org.nz)