

Despite the tough challenges and the high relapse rate, there's every reason to choose to quit. Tobacco smokers can begin recovery within a few hours of the last cigarette smoked as carbon monoxide exits the body and heart rate and blood pressure normalize. Nicotine is also cleared from the body within just a few days of quitting. Food tastes and smells better, even the previous smoker smells better.

Marijuana users can also expect carbon monoxide to be eliminated from the body within hours, with their ability to focus returning in a few weeks. As for crack and crystal meth users, little is known about the details of recovery except that *it is* possible.

As with any undertaking, the most important thing is to have a plan—and the courage, discipline, and commitment to make it succeed.


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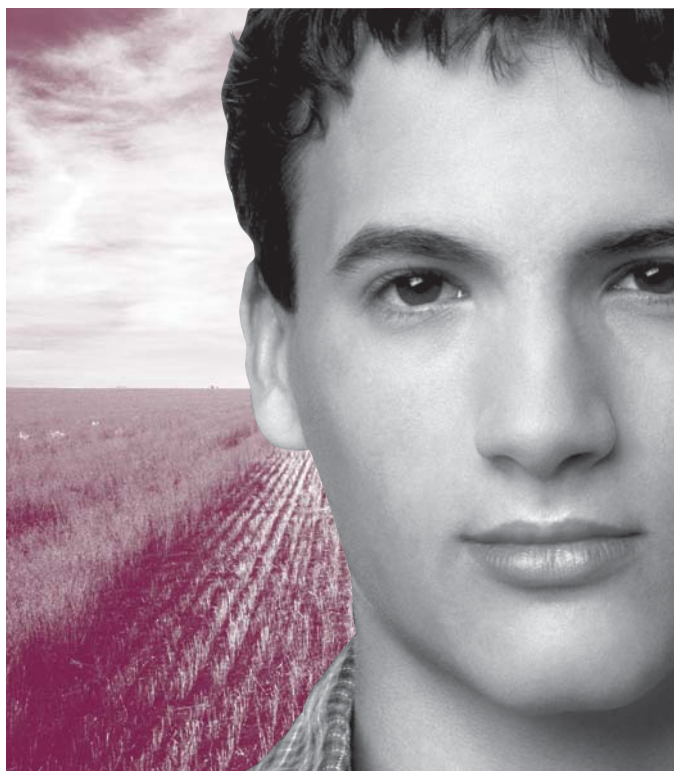
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YOUTH SMOKING

What you need to know.



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THE FACTS

- Canada is home to just under 5 million smokers over the age of 15, who make up 19% of the population.
- The cigarette smoking rate among 15 to 19 year-olds held at 15% in 2007, with daily smokers consuming an average of 12.3 cigarettes per day.
- 15% is the lowest rate of female youth smoking since monitoring began in 1965.
- Youth smoking rates may have decreased due to higher taxes, more graphic visual warnings on packages, and smoking restrictions in public places such as schoolyards, coffee shops and work environments.
- For the 9% of youths who only smoke occasionally, their risk for developing tobacco-related disease isn't really significantly reduced.
- There is a greater likelihood for working teens to smoke (33%) compared to teens in school (15%).

WHY YOUTHS TAKE UP THE HABIT

Youth smoking could be attributed to several factors, among which:

- **Having relatives at home who smoke.** Studies show that kids are more likely to consider smoking "normal" and to smoke if people in their immediate background—their parents, siblings and other role models—smoke.
- **The need for peer acceptance.** Besides family, friends exert the greatest influence on youths. Many smokers start the habit to gain the friendship of classmates who also

smoke and for whom smoking may seem "cool." Some also take up smoking to rebel or assert their independence in their growing up years.

- **The influence of advertising and the mass media.** Additionally, there's advertising and the media that set trends, promote lifestyles, and breed a culture of hero-worship. While the movies and television show celebrities and other influential people smoking, tobacco advertising campaigns continue to market a lifestyle where smoking appears hip and fashionable.
- **A way to deal with stress or as a form of weight control.** Some start smoking to cope with or escape from stress and other growing-up pains. Still, others—especially girls—smoke in the false or mistaken belief that smoking keeps one trim or enables one to lose weight.
- **Youthful curiosity.** Finally, there's the usual desire to experiment with things new—and to experience a new kind of rush.

TOBACCO SMOKING

Tobacco can be smoked in the form of a cigarette or cigar or via a pipe. Cigarettes are essentially shredded tobacco leaves and additives rolled in chemically treated paper. Cigars, on the other hand, are shredded tobacco rolled in sheets of reconstituted tobacco. A relatively new tobacco option are *cigarillos* (plain or flavoured little cigars) that are sold singly. CTUMS 2007 reports that 31% of youth aged 15-19 have tried this product, with 12% having done so in just the last 30 days.

Smoking is free-basing nicotine. The average youth smoker lights up 12.3 sticks of cigarettes and inhales about 150 times per day. Tobacco smoking replaces the oxygen in the body with carbon monoxide, increasing both heart rate and breathing rate. It also interrupts the flow of air and blood into the lungs and narrows the blood vessels, which causes blood pressure to rise.

Tobacco smoke contains tar, a particulate matter that bears over 4,000 chemicals, some 50 of which cause cancer. The average smoker deposits about a cup of tar in his/her airways and lungs each year.

Addiction to nicotine is often thought to be less harmful than addiction to drugs. However, the reality is that four per cent of all substance abuse deaths are from illicit drugs, another 16% from alcohol-related causes, and the remaining 80% from tobacco use.

OTHER SUBSTANCES THAT YOUTHS SMOKE

MARIJUANA Though sometimes smoked using a normal pipe or a water pipe, marijuana leaves are more commonly rolled in cigarette papers before being smoked. Occasionally, marijuana is also smoked as “blunts”—that is, marijuana leaves rolled in tobacco leaf (instead of paper) wrappers.

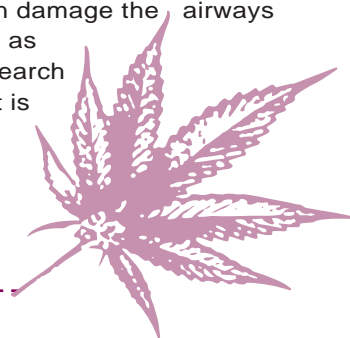
Marijuana contains the active ingredient delta 9-tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), which can cause extreme psychological dependence in users. Youths who smoke marijuana show a lack of interest in their studies, in work, in making friends and building relationships. In fact, most suffer from “amotivational syndrome,” or the loss of interest in anything else other than dope. Because THC is stored in fat cells, withdrawal effects may persist even long after a marijuana user quits.

Short-term effects of marijuana use include: relaxation and sometimes loss of motor coordination, impaired concentration/memory, altered perception, paranoia, dilated pupils, dry mouth and throat, increased heart rate, and fear and anxiety.

On the other hand, long-term effects include: decreased hormone levels that sustain growth and development, damaged sperm, irregular menstrual cycles, diminished fertility for both sexes, COPD, compromised immune response, and diminished coping skills.

Marijuana has more cancer-causing agents than tobacco. The two differ primarily in terms of the amount used. Very few will smoke the same amount of marijuana per day as they will tobacco. Also, marijuana users don't usually smoke for their lifetime.

Marijuana users tend to breathe in the smoke more deeply, holding it in their lungs for as long as possible to maximize the effect. Marijuana smoking can damage the airways in much the same way as tobacco smoking. Research indicates that one joint is roughly the equivalent of five cigarette sticks.



HASHISH comes from the resin of marijuana; thus, it has the same effects as its derivative. Because hashish has a higher THC content, it results in more heightened sensations. Appetite loss, anxiety, nervousness, and sleep disturbances are some of the withdrawal symptoms associated with the use of hashish.

OPIUM AND HEROIN Opium is an illegal substance that first spread in the Americas in the 19th century by way of Chinese laborers. Unlike tobacco, opium is heated—not burned—so it yields no tar. It was traditionally used with pipes in dens where workers would binge for days at a time, oblivious to their surroundings. Though the use of opium in pure form is almost non-existent today, it's worth mentioning because heroin, a common drug in the 21st century, is derived from it.

Just like opium, heroin is heated rather than burned. “Chasing the dragon” is the term the Chinese commonly use for heroin smoking. Gram for gram, heroin smoking is less efficient than heroin injection in producing a “high.”

However, smoking is gaining popularity because purer forms of heroin are easily obtainable and because users are better informed about the risk of spreading HIV via injections. Still, heroin smokers have also been known to graduate to using heroin intravenously.

Heroin is the fastest acting of all opiates, reaching the brain in seven seconds. It produces a relatively short euphoria, which peaks in 10 to 15 minutes from the beginning of use. Thus, users often smoke heroin along with crack (speedballs), which gives a more intense pleasure while also increasing the risk of sudden death. Withdrawal effects from heroin smoking are less severe than from injections.

CRACK Sold cheaply in the form of rock crystals, crack may be smoked in a pipe, while held onto a lit cigarette, or free-based. Most users start smoking crack for recreational purposes. Because crack gives an intense but short high lasting from just five to 10 minutes, most users tend to binge on it, with the periods of high decreasing—and the addiction increasing—with each use. Eventually, crack users experience a “crash,” which is characterized by feelings of depression, alienation, anxiety, irritability, extreme fatigue, paranoia, along with deterioration in physical health and tactile hallucinations (having “insects under the skin”).

Crack smoking constricts the blood vessels, dilates the pupils, and increases body temperature, heart rate and blood pressure. It may cause acute heart attacks or strokes. Used together with alcohol, crack intensifies the euphoria while increasing the risk of sudden death. Withdrawal causes severe cravings.

CRYSTAL METHAMPHETAMINE Like crack, crystal meth is cheap and readily available, making it the most popular street drug. Most users also start out as recreational users, until they become addicted to the substance. Unlike crack, however, crystal meth gives a substantially longer high of

about six to eight hours. This makes the drug a highly potent stimulant.

People high on crystal meth are euphoric at first; they have increased attention and activity and lose their appetite. But after the initial rush, they go through periods of agitation that can lead to erratic and violent behavior. Crystal meth users may stay awake for days or weeks doing little except smoke and snort. They develop mood swings, become psychotic and paranoid, hallucinate, severely lose weight—in short, their personality disintegrates.

Crystal meth is an extremely dangerous drug. Any dose could be fatal. By rapidly increasing body temperature and breathing rate, it can cause seizures or sudden death.

QUITTING AND STAYING SMOKE-FREE

Quitting smoking can be a difficult process, especially for one addicted to it. Some can quit cold turkey, some take a longer time to succeed. Others still experience a relapse and go back to smoking. Often, quitting is accompanied by withdrawal symptoms, which may include cravings, tremors, headaches, nausea, sleeping difficulties, feelings of anxiety, irritability, even grief and loss. Withdrawal effects and social situations continually test one's discipline and resolve.

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