



**Supporting  
someone with a  
lived experience  
of mental illness  
to stop smoking**

**A guide for carers and family**

# Stopping smoking can improve mental wellbeing

Some people worry that mental health may worsen when someone stops smoking, but this is not the case. In fact mental wellbeing can improve. When a person quits, it can be normal for them to feel up and down at first.

**But new research shows that after their feelings of withdrawal are gone, many people who quit feel:**

- › less stressed
- › less anxious and depressed
- › more positive about life

**than those who keep smoking.**

## Nicotine withdrawal

Many people have feelings of withdrawal when quitting smoking. Some of these feelings can be mistaken for a flare up of a mental health condition.

These include feeling irritable, frustrated, restless, anxious or depressed, and finding it harder to focus or sleep well. Most people don't have all these feelings.

For many people these feelings are gone within four weeks, but for others they can last longer.

Talk with Quitline, their doctor, or mental health care team for help to manage feelings of withdrawal.

# Checking on medicines

Tobacco smoke can affect how some medicines work, including some medicines for mental health conditions.

When someone you care for stops smoking, it's important to consult their doctor or pharmacist as they might need to look at their medicines.

## Top reasons people stop smoking



Family



Housing



Feel better



Money



Holiday



Better health

## Reach out for support

- › **Encourage** the person you care for to use their mental health support services and their doctor.
- › **Quitline counsellors** have helped thousands of people, including those living with a mental illness. People who connect with Quitline are more likely to stop smoking and stay quit.
- › **Don't forget** to look after yourself! Talk to your GP, Quitline or carer support service.

## How to support someone who's quitting smoking

- › A **smokefree** house and car can really help.
- › **Spend time together** in places where you can't smoke, such as a cafe or the cinema.
- › **Help take their mind off smoking** by going for a walk or playing a game.
- › **Quitting can take several goes.** Make sure they're not too hard on themselves.
- › Your **support** can make a big difference.

## To help with cravings, try the 4Ds:



**Delay**



**Deep breathe**



**Drink water**



**Do something else**

## How can Quitline help?

People with a lived experience of mental illness can stop smoking with the right support.

Some people can be concerned about how their mood might be affected by stopping smoking or cutting down.

**If the person you care for chooses to, Quitline counsellors can help them track their mood and experiences using a short checklist during the weeks they are quitting. This can help them tell:**

- › what are likely to be feelings of nicotine withdrawal
- › how their mental health is going
- › if they might be experiencing medication side effects
- › when they need to talk with their doctor or pharmacist to get support.

**Quitline counsellors are qualified experts and understand the challenges of quitting. They will listen carefully and provide practical advice and support suited to the person you care for.**

## Who can you speak to for support?

- › Your **doctor** (GP)
- › The **mental health service** that supports the person you care for
- › A **carer support service** such as Carer Gateway at [carergateway.gov.au](http://carergateway.gov.au) (1800 422 737)
- › **Quitline** (13 7848)

# Quitline 13 7848

Visit [quit.org.au](http://quit.org.au)

### To contact Quitline:

- › **Call 13 7848**
- › **Text 'callback'** to **0482 090 634**
- › Chat online via **webchat** at **quit.org.au**
- › Message us on **WhatsApp 61 385 832 920** or **Facebook Messenger @quitvic**
- › Or ask Quitline to **call you back** for **free** at **quit.org.au/callback**

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