



PARTICIPANT HANDBOOK

WELCOME TO BREATHE FREE

LUNGSPEI

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Welcome to Breathe Free

Breathe Free is a project of LungNSPEI designed to help you reduce or quit smoking in a way that works for you. This handbook will act as a guide, providing helpful information, and offer tools to support your quit journey. Each section will guide you step-by-step through reducing or quitting smoking, building coping skills, and tracking your progress.

What This Handbook Helps You Do

This handbook provides tools to help you:

- Understand your smoking patterns and what influences them
- Set realistic goals for reducing or quitting
- Build strategies for cravings, triggers, and stress
- Use harm reduction if quitting all at once isn't right for you
- Track your progress over 12 weeks (or any timeline you choose)
- Access supports and resources available in your province (NS or PEI)

Your Quit Journey

Quitting or reducing smoking is different for everyone. Use this space to reflect on your goals.

My Reasons for Quitting or Reducing Smoking

(Write down why you want to take this step.)

My Personal Goals

Examples: “I will smoke 2 fewer cigarettes per day in 2 weeks”, or “I will quit smoking in 6 weeks by using an NRT (nicotine replacement therapy) plan that my pharmacist recommends for me.”, or “I will stop smoking indoors tomorrow by only smoking outside”

Tips: Use the SMART goal format

- S - Be specific (Give yourself more details than “quit smoking by my birthday”)
- M - Measurable (How will you know you succeeded? example: 2 cigarettes/day)

- A – Achievable (Can you reach your goal with your current skills and resources?)
- R – Realistic (Does this goal matter to you?)
- T – Time-bound (Set dates, deadlines)

Write down your personal goals:

Possible Challenges I Might Face While Working Toward My Goal

Understanding Triggers

Triggers are things that make you want to smoke. Common examples include:

- Stress or strong emotions
- Social situations
- Drinking coffee or alcohol, or after a meal
- Certain times of day

My Personal Triggers

My Strategies to Handle Triggers

Examples: deep breathing, texting a friend, using nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) (gum, patch, etc.), taking a short walk.

My Strengths and Supports

What has helped you make changes in the past? Who or what gives you support?

Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT)

You may choose to use Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT) for up to 12 weeks through Breathe Free. The purpose of NRT is to:

- Reduce Cravings
- Lessen Withdrawal
- Help you stick to your goal

Types of NRT include:

- Patches
- Gum
- Lozenges
- Inhalers
- Mouth Spray

Things that can effect NRT and the way your body processes nicotine:

- Prescription medications
- Pregnancy

Always consult a doctor, nurse practitioner, and/or a pharmacist if you have any questions or concerns about NRT.

Nicotine Reduction Options

If quitting all at once isn't right for you, nicotine reduction is encouraged. Some ways you may do this are:

- Delay your first cigarette of the day by 1 hour
- Reduce the total number of cigarettes you smoke
- Avoid smoking indoors

Every step counts.

My Support Options

You can choose who - if anyone - you want involved in your quit journey.

People I Can Reach Out To (Optional)

- Friend(s): _____
- Family member: _____
- Elder or cultural support: _____
- Peer or community contact: _____

Ways to Grow Your Support Network

- Tell a trusted friend about your quit or reduction goal and ask if they can check in with you.
- Join an online quit community.
- Connect with others in your community - a neighbour, coworker, or peer who also wants to make a health change.

- Visit local community centres or wellness programs that offer group activities or hobbies to help reduce stress. (Ex: yoga, knitting, book club, language exchange)
- Reach out to cultural, spiritual, or community leaders (Elders, faith leaders, peer mentors) if this feels meaningful for you.
- Talk to your healthcare provider or pharmacist - they can offer encouragement and practical support.
- Set up a “text buddy” - someone you can message during cravings or stressful moments.

Tracking My Progress - Weekly Check-In Chart

| Week | Cigarettes/Day | Cravings | Stress Level (1-10) | Notes |
|------|----------------|----------|---------------------|-------|
| 1 | | | | |
| 2 | | | | |
| 3 | | | | |
| 4 | | | | |
| 5 | | | | |
| 6 | | | | |
| 7 | | | | |
| 8 | | | | |
| 9 | | | | |
| 10 | | | | |
| 11 | | | | |
| 12 | | | | |

Planning for Slip-Ups

In the smoking cessation process, “slip-ups” (sometimes called lapses) are brief or one-time returns to smoking after someone has quit or is trying to quit, without fully going back to regular smoking.

A slip-up might look like:

- Having one cigarette during a stressful moment
- Taking a few puffs at a social event
- Smoking once after days, weeks, or months of being smoke-free

Slip-ups are very common and are considered a normal part of the quitting journey for many people. They do not mean someone has failed or that they are back to being a regular smoker. The key difference is:

Slip-up (lapse): A temporary return to smoking

Relapse: A full return to previous smoking patterns

In cessation support, slip-ups are often treated as learning opportunities. They can help people identify triggers, strengthen coping strategies, and adjust their quit plan moving forward.

If I Slip Up, I Will:

- Take a breath and avoid judging myself. This is a natural part of the quitting process and it does not mean you are failing.
- Reach out to my support person
- Revisit what triggered the slip-up
- Try again when I’m ready

My Slip-Up Plan

(Write how you want to respond if it happens.)

Additional Resources – Nova Scotia

Key Provincial Resources

- **Tobacco Free Nova Scotia (TFNS):** Provides free, confidential counselling for quitting smoking or vaping.
 - Quit Line: **Call 811** to reach a TFNS quit counsellor.
 - Weekly motivational text messages: text SMOKEFREE to 1 (902) 700-7700. [Tobacco Free NS](#)
- **NS Health – Stop Smoking Program:** Offers group counselling, support for nicotine addiction. [Smoke-Free Nova Scotia](#)
 - To register, you call NS Health intake depending on zone:
 - Central (Halifax, etc.): 1-855-922-1122
 - Eastern Zone (Cape Breton): 1-877-567-0632
 - Other zones also have dedicated numbers. library.nshealth.ca
- **Tobacco Cessation Support After a Cancer Diagnosis:** Special service via Nova Scotia Health for people diagnosed with cancer. Counselling by phone, text, or secure chat. [Nova Scotia Health](#)
- **Lung Screening Program:** Nova Scotia's Lung Screening Program (for those at high risk of lung cancer) includes tobacco cessation supports. To access: call 1-833-505-LUNG (5864)

Educational / Self-Help Resources

- **HealthyNS – Stopping Tobacco Use:** Information about quitting strategies, combining counselling with medications, NRT, etc. library.nshealth.ca

Specialized / Alternative Support

- **Nova Scotia Health Smoke-and-Tobacco Reduction in Hospital Settings:** If you're hospitalized, free NRT gum/patches may be offered as part of hospital-based cessation support. Speak to your care team about this opportunity.[P1]

Additional Resources – Prince Edward Island

Key Provincial / Government Resources

- **PEI Smoking Cessation Program:** Covers 100% of the cost of nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) (patches, gum, lozenges, inhaler) or specific prescription medications (bupropion / varenicline) for eligible PEI residents. Government of Prince Edward Island+2Government of Prince Edward Island+2
 - To enroll: book an appointment with a nurse at your local Primary Care Network office.
 - Contact: (902) 368-4319, or email: quitsmoking@gov.pe.ca
- **Smokers' Helpline:** Toll-free counselling and quit support: 1-877-513-5333.
 - Online resources: SmokersHelpline.ca.
- **PEI Cancer Treatment Centre – Tobacco Cessation & Relapse Prevention:** For people with cancer (patients & caregivers), there is a dedicated cessation / relapse-prevention program.
 - To connect: call the Cancer Patient Navigator at 902-894-2552, or email cancerpatientnavigator@ihis.org. Government of Prince Edward Island

Educational / Self-Help Resources

- **Quit Your Way – Vaping & Smoking Youth Guide:** A guide for youth (and others) to reflect on triggers, develop coping strategies, create quit plans, and track progress.
https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/sites/default/files/publications/quit_your_way_vaping_youth_guide_2022_digital_version.pdf[P1]
- **PEI Smoking Cessation Program Booklet:** Contains an overview of treatment options, how to enroll, and what to expect in the program.
[Government of Prince Edward Island](#)

National Resources

- **Smoke Free Curious?** Find tools and supports to help you get there.
- **Quit with Confidence: Guide to a smoke-free life:** A self-paced resource that can support you along your quit journey from start to finish and give you the info and skills to quit smoking with confidence.

Celebrating Your Wins

Quitting or reducing smoking is a major accomplishment. Use this page to write down moments you're proud of during your cessation journey.

My Victories

- _____
- _____
- _____

My Lessons Learned

- _____
- _____
- _____

Notes

(Use this section for reflections or reminders.)

Thank you for participating in Breathe Free. You deserve support, compassion, and a smoke-free future that works for you.

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