



# 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.)

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## 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:**

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**Possible Challenges I Might Face While Working Toward My Goal**

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**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**

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## **My Strategies to Handle Triggers**

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

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## **My Strengths and Supports**

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

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## **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.)

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## 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](http://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](http://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](http://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](mailto:quitsmoking@gov.pe.ca)
- **Smokers' Helpline:** Toll-free counselling and quit support: 1-877-513-5333.
  - Online resources: [SmokersHelpline.ca](http://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](mailto:cancerpatientnavigator@ihis.org). [Government of Prince Edward Island](http://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](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.)**

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

