
NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Health

It's Weedless Wednesday — Smoking Cessation Program can help you quit

PRINCE GEORGE — As B.C. recognizes Weedless Wednesday — part of National Non-Smoking Week — smokers are offered helpful tips from the northern medical program and the Smoking Cessation Program to make quitting easier.

“B.C. has the advantage of having the lowest smoking rate in the country, thanks to a strong tobacco control policy and supports for smokers like the Smoking Cessation Program and QuitNow services,” said Health Minister Terry Lake, who toured the medical school today with faculty and medical students. “Smokers will see health benefits after just one day of being smoke-free and Weedless Wednesday encourages smokers to think about a one-day-at-a-time approach.”

Medical students training in the northern medical program, a joint partnership between the UBC faculty of medicine and the University of Northern British Columbia, and QuitNow recommend quitting by taking easy to achieve steps.

Suggestions include:

- Choose a quit date and tell everyone about your big day.
- Decide on your quit method. The Smoking Cessation Program is a great resource.
- Know your triggers.
- Conquer your cravings. Consider drinking more water, and eating fruit and vegetables.
- Manage withdrawal. Call HealthLinkBC at 8-1-1, or go online to QuitNow.ca for help.
- Build your social support. Call or text a friend.
- Control your environment — don't go places you know smokers will be.

“The northern medical program provides students with a strong and well-rounded medical education right here in the North,” said Dr. David Snadden, executive associate dean, education, UBC faculty of medicine. “Our medical education provides future doctors with the foundation they need to support their patients and the continued health and wellness of communities.”

British Columbia has achieved the lowest smoking rates in Canada for the 14th year in a row, which reflects the Province's policies and programs that promote healthy living and smoking cessation. The Smoking Cessation Program is designed to help British Columbians stop smoking by providing annual coverage of prescription smoking cessation drugs or nicotine replacement gum or patches.

Since Sept. 30, 2011, the Smoking Cessation Program has placed close to 247,000 orders for nicotine replacement therapies through HealthLink BC. As well, over 62,000 people have obtained a prescription for a smoking cessation drug while visiting their physician for another reason.

Further building on this success, the BC Cancer Agency, in partnership with Northern Health and the Canadian Cancer Society, is launching the Stop Smoking Before Surgery program as part of National Non-Smoking Week.

"People trying to quit using tobacco are more successful when they have appropriate tools and supports to guide them, including the Stop Smoking Before Surgery program," said Dr. Ronald Chapman, vice-president of medicine and interim chief medical health officer. "You will make your visit in the hospital shorter, have a better and faster recovery, and it may even help you quit for good."

Stop Smoking Before Surgery, available on QuitNow.ca, is a new program to help surgery patients in northern B.C. quit smoking before surgery and to stay smoke-free in the long term.

"I have already started to notice a number of positive changes since quitting smoking, including no longer carrying around a lingering smell of tobacco," said Virginia Dekker, former tobacco user and Prince George resident. "Physically I feel better and have noticed a big improvement. Even my skin looks better and feels healthier."

Benefits of quitting include increased confidence, whiter teeth, fresher breath, clearer skin and fewer wrinkles, as well as improved breathing and fitness.

The northern medical program located at the University of Northern British Columbia is part of the faculty of medicine at the University of British Columbia. Along with the island medical program at the University of Victoria and the southern medical program at UBC Okanagan in Kelowna, this distributed medical program was the first of its kind in North America and has proven to be a highly successful model of distributed education.

Learn More:

Looking for more information on quitting smoking? Please visit:

www.health.gov.bc.ca/pharmacare/stop-smoking/

Looking for support or information on how to plan quitting? Check out: www.quitnow.ca

Stop Smoking Before Surgery with QuitNow:

<http://www.quitnow.ca/helping-others-quit/healthcare-providers/what-works/stop-smoking-before-surgery>

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