

Is smoking part of your life?

Studies consistently show there are more smokers – especially young smokers – in the lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB)* communities than there are in the population at large.¹

There may be several reasons for this:

- Homophobia and discrimination towards lesbians, gay men and bisexual people can be stressful and isolating. Smoking may be a way of dealing with the stress.
- Bars are often a common place to socialize where smoking used to be widespread.
- Homophobia, prejudice and discrimination may keep members of LGB communities from accessing good healthcare and the support needed to quit smoking.
- The aggressive and widespread use of targeted advertising by tobacco companies in the past may have influenced a whole generation of LGB community members to start smoking.

* LGB communities are referenced throughout this brochure. While there is limited data on transsexual, transgender and queer communities in this area, similar patterns and trends may exist.

¹ Toronto Rainbow Tobacco Survey; Burning Love; Smoking Among; High Prevalence



What we do:

Thanks to the work of our volunteers and staff, and the generosity of our donors, the Canadian Cancer Society is leading the way in the fight against cancer.

The Canadian Cancer Society:

- funds research on all types of cancer
- offers comprehensive and credible information on cancer, risk reduction and treatment
- provides support for people living with cancer, family members and friends
- advocates for healthy public policy

Contact us for up-to-date information about cancer, to connect with our support services or to make a donation.



Canadian Cancer Society
Société canadienne du cancer

Let's Make Cancer History

1 888 939-3333 | www.cancer.ca

TTY: 1 866 786-3934

This is general information developed by the Canadian Cancer Society. It is not intended to replace the advice of a qualified healthcare provider.

The material in this publication may be copied or reproduced without permission; however, the following citation must be used: *Facts about tobacco for lesbian, gay and bisexual people: Reasons and resources for quitting smoking*. Canadian Cancer Society 2009.

© Canadian Cancer Society 2009 | Printed May 2009 | 271061



Canadian Cancer Society
Société canadienne du cancer

Facts about tobacco for lesbian, gay and bisexual people

Reasons and resources for quitting smoking



Let's Make Cancer History

1 888 939-3333 | www.cancer.ca

Smoking is Canada's #1 preventable cause of death.

The dangers of smoking are all too real.

First, smoking is highly addictive, due to the powerful drug nicotine that's found in all forms of tobacco. Once you, your partner, or friend starts smoking, it's tough to quit.

Second, with every puff you can breathe in up to 4000 dangerous chemicals, including:

- carbon monoxide (found in car exhaust)
- cadmium (used in batteries)
- arsenic (used in rat poison)

More than 50 of these chemicals are known to cause cancer. In fact, smoking is the chief cause of 85% of cases of lung cancer and is also responsible for 30% of all cancer deaths.

Third, smoking diminishes everyday quality of life by impairing one's sense of smell and taste, and causing shortness of breath and sinus congestion. It can lead to chronic bronchitis, emphysema, heart attacks and strokes.

The plain truth is: smoking can kill you and those you care about. Each year, smoking claims the lives of over 37,000 Canadians – that's more than the number of deaths from AIDS, car accidents, suicides, murders, fires and accidental poisonings, combined.

Even second-hand smoke is dangerous.

Maybe you don't smoke, but those you share your life or home with do. Unfortunately, you are still affected by the smoke from those around you.

The typical cigarette burns for about 12 minutes, but smokers only inhale its smoke for about 30 seconds. The rest of the time, the toxic smoke lingers in the air – a hazard for both non-smokers and smokers.

How harmful is second-hand smoke? Those exposed are more likely to experience such symptoms as sore eyes and throat, nasal irritation, coughing and wheezing, nausea and dizziness. If you have been exposed for years, you're more likely to suffer and even die from respiratory and heart problems. Your chances of developing lung cancer climb by 25%.

All in all, more than 1000 non-smoking Canadians, including members of LGB communities, die each year from the effects of second-hand smoke.



It's never too late to come out and quit.

Whether you or someone you care about has smoked for a month, a year, a decade or half a lifetime, it's always worth the effort to come out and quit.

When you stop smoking, your body immediately begins to cleanse itself of the poisons in tobacco, which reduces the associated symptoms. Your risk of cancers of the mouth, throat, esophagus, bladder, kidney and pancreas decreases and within 10 years of quitting, your risk of dying from lung cancer is cut in half. Not only that, you'll be reducing the hazards of second-hand smoke for those around you.

One way to come out and begin quitting is by talking to your doctor or healthcare provider, who can tell you about different options that are available.

We can help you quit.

Smoking is an addiction, so coming out to quit is far from easy. The Canadian Cancer Society offers a number of resources to help you along the way. The Society is an inclusive organization that values diversity and takes pride in serving lesbians, gay men and bisexual people.

You can call our *Smokers' Helpline* and talk directly with a trained quit specialist who will answer your questions and help you create a personalized quit plan. This free, confidential service is offered in English or French, and is available by calling 1 877 513-5333.

Or, check out *Smokers' Helpline Online* at www.smokershelpline.ca. This interactive program is available 24/7 and includes a range of helpful tools.

You can also request *One Step at a Time*, our series of free quit smoking booklets available at your local Canadian Cancer Society office, at www.cancer.ca or by calling *Smokers' Helpline*.

There's never been a better time to come out and quit!

