



## Key Facts About Quitting Cold Turkey

TIS teams are funded to carry out population health promotion activities. They are not funded to provide smoking cessation support. TIS workers still need up-to-date knowledge of how people quit, as this can inform TIS population health promotion campaigns and educational activities. This factsheet provides an overview of how people can be supported to quit cold turkey.

### How do most Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people quit smoking?

Evidence suggests that supported quit attempts (e.g., using nicotine replacement therapy (NRT), having group or individual counselling) are more successful than unaided attempts. However not everyone wants to use medicine such as NRT, or see a counsellor, and the majority of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people quit unaided. Unaided quitting is known as going 'cold turkey'.

### Tips for quitting cold turkey

People who want to quit this way should be advised to make a plan. A number of online tools are available to guide anyone who wants to make a quit plan (see Box 1). Planning when they will quit and what they will do when cravings strike means the person trying to quit is more likely to succeed. The aim is to change the habits associated with smoking. This means thinking about when and where they usually smoke and identifying smoking triggers. Planning includes:

- setting a quit date;
- making a list of reasons for quitting as motivation;
- going smoke-free by throwing away smoking items including cigarettes, ashtrays, lighters;
- thinking about how to deal with triggers, for example:
  - changing routines linked with smoking (e.g., instead of smoking in a work break go for a walk);
  - avoiding situations where smoking might be the 'norm' (e.g., the pub on a Friday night);
  - starting new activities (e.g., exercise) to replace smoking and to act as a distraction;
- starting a money box or savings account for all the money that would have gone on cigarettes – this can be used to reward/celebration reaching smoke-free milestones;
- telling family and friends, and asking them to provide support.

Evidence suggests stopping abruptly is more effective than cutting down to quit (tapering).



### Box 1: Tools to support going cold turkey

Several online tools are available to help with making a quit plan and staying motivated, including:

#### Make smoking history

- online planner available from <https://www.makesmokinghistory.org.au/quit-planner>. Plan can be downloaded and printed once completed.
- downloadable 'Quit Because You Can' Booklet includes a plan template [https://uploads-ssl.webflow.com/5df9d1273a70bf66a189e000/62c53a834dd1f92b00e060f6\\_2022-07-06%20MSH%20Quit%20Because%20Your%20Can%20A5%20booklet.pdf](https://uploads-ssl.webflow.com/5df9d1273a70bf66a189e000/62c53a834dd1f92b00e060f6_2022-07-06%20MSH%20Quit%20Because%20Your%20Can%20A5%20booklet.pdf)

#### Koori Quitline

- Joining icanquit gives access to an online quit smoking tracking tool, tips for staying on track and an online support community <https://www.icanquit.com.au/getting-started>
- Tailored support provided by Quitly an automated chatbot on Facebook Messenger <https://www.icanquit.com.au/quitting-methods/quitly-the-quit-smoking-chatbot-on-facebook-messenger>

#### Quit

- Quit's planning tool provides a step by step guide to planning a quit attempt <https://www.quit.org.au/tools/your-quit-plan/>
- QuitCoach is an online tools that creates a tailored quit plan based on responses to questions about motivation, confidence and past quit attempts <http://www.quitcoach.org.au/>
- QuitTxt uses daily SMS messages designed to help a person prepare to quit, maintain motivation and stay on track <http://www.quitcoach.org.au/QuitTextInformation.aspx>
- QuitMail sends regular emails over 12 weeks, tracking financial and health gains and providing targeted tips to stay quit <https://mail.quit.org.au/pub/pubType/EO/pubID/zzzz598c5f026b265169/interface.html>

#### Quit Tasmania

- The 'Quit Because You Can' Booklet which includes a plan template is available as part of a 'quit pack'. The pack can be downloaded or mailed out to anyone living in Tasmania <https://www.quittas.org.au/contact/get-the-quit-pack/>
- Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care
- My QuitBuddy is a free app that provides tips and distractions to help with cravings, and allows progress to be tracked in terms of health and financial gains once a quit date and quit goals have been set. <https://www.health.gov.au/resources/apps-and-tools/my-quitbuddy-app>





### What does the evidence say about quitting cold turkey?

#### **Mayi Kuwayu, a National Study of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Wellbeing**

(Cohen et al. 2021), found that less than 6% of people who used to smoke had received support from a quit smoking program or service when they quit. This indicates that the majority of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders quit unaided;

#### **The Which Way? Study**

(Kennedy et al., 2022) surveyed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women from across Australia and found that only a third (35.7%) had ever had used NRT or other stop smoking medications during a quit attempt. Reasons for this included wanting to quit alone (31.6%) and thinking it's better to quit cold turkey (19.6%). The study also found that stopping abruptly rather than gradually was more likely to result in longer term cessation;

#### **Talking about the Smokes**

(Thomas et al. 2019) shows that people who smoke are more likely to make and sustain a quit attempt if they have support from family and friends to quit.

### Further Reading

Cohen, R., Maddox, R., Sedgwick, M., Thurber, K. A., Brinckley, M. M., Barrett, E. M., & Lovett, R. (2021). Tobacco Related Attitudes and Behaviours in Relation to Exposure to the Tackling Indigenous Smoking Program: Evidence from the Mayi Kuwayu Study. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 18(20), 10962 <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph182010962>

Kennedy, M., Barrett, E., Heris, C., Mersha, A., Chamberlain, C., Hussein, P., ... & Maddox, R. (2022). Smoking and quitting characteristics of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women of reproductive age: findings from the Which Way? study. *Medical Journal of Australia*, 217, S6-S18. <https://doi.org/10.5694/mja2.51630>

Thomas, D. P., Davey, M. E., van der Sterren, A. E., Lyons, L., Hunt, J. M., & Bennet, P. T. (2019). Social networks and quitting in a national cohort of Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander smokers. *Drug and Alcohol Review*, 38(1), 82-91. <https://doi.org/10.1111/dar.12891> .

