



Stop smoking before and during your hospital stay

Enhanced recovery after surgery program (RAAC)

TO BETTER GUIDE YOU

Your surgery is coming up. To help everything go smoothly, it is strongly recommended that you stop smoking.

This information sheet gives you the key information and available resources to help you stop smoking.

To protect everyone's health, smoking and vaping are not allowed in the CISSS de la Montérégie-Ouest facilities. Stopping smoking will help you recover more easily after surgery.

Did you know? Smoking:

- **Increases the risks during surgery**
(ex.: infection, complications)
- **Slows down wound healing**
- **Slows down your overall recovery**

How long before surgery should I stop smoking?

The best time to stop smoking is 6 to 8 weeks before your surgery. This greatly reduces your risk of complications. In fact, your risk becomes almost the same as someone who doesn't smoke.

At the very least, your surgeon asks that you **do not smoke for at least 24 hours before your surgery.**

How to manage stress and cravings to smoke

It's normal to feel more stressed when stopping smoking, especially as your surgery gets closer. Tobacco is addictive, but there are ways to help you deal with cravings and manage withdrawal symptoms.

Your pharmacist can recommend options that are right for you. Your doctor or nurse can also answer any questions you may have.

You can also get daily support from the **I QUIT helpline** (see page 3). Their phone follow-up service can increase your chances of reaching your goal.

Nicotine is the main substance that causes addiction to cigarettes because it creates a pleasant feeling in the brain. But it's the other harmful chemicals in cigarette smoke that cause disease.



What products can help me?

There are two main types of products that can help you stop smoking:

- 1. Nicotine replacement products** (patches, gum, lozenges, and others), available over the counter at the pharmacy.
- 2. Prescription medications**, available through your doctor.

Each option has its own benefits. Talk to your healthcare provider to choose the one that works best for you.



Why does smoking slow down healing?

Smoking reduces the amount of oxygen that reaches your organs and skin. After surgery or during recovery from a health problem, your skin and other tissues (even your bones) don't heal as well. This increases the risk of infection.

Stop-smoking aids, on the other hand, do not slow down healing. Products with nicotine help reduce cravings without affecting your body's ability to recover. However, they may not be recommended in some cases.

Can these be covered by insurance?

Some of the cost may be covered by your private insurance or by the public drug insurance plan in Quebec (RAMQ). To qualify for coverage, you need a prescription, either from your pharmacist for a nicotine replacement product, or from your doctor for a prescription medication. There may be exceptions, depending on your situation.

Is an e-cigarette effective for stopping smoking?

Right now, there isn't enough research to confirm that vaping helps people stop smoking. In general, vaping liquids with nicotine may help reduce how much you smoke. However, these products are not yet regulated in Canada.

The vapor from e-cigarettes contains toxic substances, but in smaller amounts than regular cigarettes.

If you have questions or concerns, talk to a healthcare provider.



Useful resources

- **I QUIT helpline**

Specialists in stopping or reducing smoking are available to help you:

- reduce withdrawal symptoms
- handle difficult situations
- prevent relapses
- manage stress
- connect you with other resources as needed (for example, to prevent weight gain)

These services are free and confidential.

- **Support by phone**

1 866-jarrete (527-7383)

Monday to Thursday: 8 a.m. to 9 p.m.

Friday: 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

- **Support by text**

24 hours, 7 days a week text messaging service available at

smat.ca

- **In-person support**

Visit a **Quit Smoking Centre** near you.

See the list of centres by region at jarrete.qc.ca.

- **For help in Montérégie, call**

1-844-429-3358 or visit catmonteregie.ca

The CHUM has made other health information sheets available. Ask which ones might be helpful for you.

The content of this document does not replace the advice, the diagnosis, or the treatment provided by your healthcare professional.

Text adapted from the health information sheet "Quitting smoking during my hospital stay", developed by the health literacy centre at the CHUM: chumontreal.qc.ca/centre-litteratie-sante.



Who can I talk to?

You can contact a specialist through the **I QUIT helpline** or a **Quit Smoking Centre**. They can give you practical advice to help you stop more easily.
