

## YOUR GUIDE TO VCH'S SMOKE-FREE PREMISES POLICY

As a health care provider, Vancouver Coastal Health has an obligation to promote good health practices. We are committed to ensuring a safe, healthy and clean environment for everyone.

Vancouver Coastal Health is completely smoke free. Smoking will not be permitted on all VCH property. This includes all buildings, grounds, and parking lots.

We also ask our clients in the community to protect our home health care workers by not smoking in the room you will be treated in for one hour before the scheduled visit and while your health care worker is in your home.

Thank you for **not smoking**  
on VCH property.



As of May 31, 2008  
Vancouver Coastal Health is

# Smoke-Free Inside & Outside

**Vancouver  
CoastalHealth**  
*Promoting wellness. Ensuring care.*



**SmokeFree**  
PREMISES POLICY

CLICK OR CALL  
**quitnow.ca**  
1-877-455-2233

  
**BRITISH  
COLUMBIA**  
The Best Place on Earth

## WHY THE POLICY?

There is no safe level of exposure to second-hand smoke. Second-hand smoke is a serious health hazard that can lead to disease and premature death not only in smokers, but in children and non-smokers too. Second-hand smoke is a carcinogen and contains more than 50 cancer-causing chemicals. Even brief exposure to second-hand smoke has immediate adverse effects and increases risk for heart disease and lung cancer.

We recognize that this policy is a big change for some people so we encourage you to visit our website at [www.vch.ca/tobacco](http://www.vch.ca/tobacco). If you have a question that is not answered on our website, or have a comment to share, please e-mail us at [smokefree@vch.ca](mailto:smokefree@vch.ca).

## WHILE YOU ARE IN HOSPITAL

While you are a patient, support is available from your doctor, nurse, or health care provider. Nicotine replacement therapy or other medication may be prescribed for you by your doctor.

VCH recommends that you quit smoking before surgery. Staying smoke free for 8 weeks before any type of surgery reduces your risk of complications, helps you heal faster and gets you home sooner. Speak to your doctor about quit smoking aids.

If you smoke, it takes longer for your wounds to heal, your surgical wounds are more likely to get infected and you have a higher chance of lung and chest infection after surgery.

To help our patients quit, VCH is implementing a smoking cessation program at five hospitals across the region which identifies, treats, and follows up with smokers.

## READY TO QUIT?

There are many proven ways to help you stop smoking. They include having a good plan, stop-smoking medication, brief counseling, and follow up with your family doctor.

The health benefits of quitting smoking include:

- Within eight hours, carbon monoxide level drops in your body and oxygen level in your blood increases to normal.
- Within 48 hours, your chances of having a heart attack start to go down and sense of smell and taste begin to improve.
- Within 72 hours, bronchial tubes relax, making breathing easier and increasing lung capacity.
- Within two weeks to three months, circulation improves and lung functioning increases up to 30%.
- Within six months, coughing, sinus congestion, tiredness and shortness of breath improve.
- Within one year, risk of smoking-related heart attack is cut in half.
- Within 10 years, risk of dying from lung cancer is cut in half.
- Within 15 years, risk of dying from a heart attack is equal to a person who never smoked.

*Source: Health Canada*

## SMOKING FACTS

- There is NO safe level of exposure to second-hand smoke.
- Each year, more than 5,800 people die from smoking-related illnesses in British Columbia.
- Smoking causes heart disease, stroke, emphysema and cancers.
- Smoking can aggravate over 40 different medical conditions like diabetes.
- Second-hand smoke harms everyone, including unborn babies.
- Smoking is the number one preventable cause of death in Canada. More Canadians die from tobacco use than from alcohol, car accidents, illicit drug use, murder, suicide and AIDS combined.
- Second hand smoke is a serious health hazard that can lead to disease and premature death in children and non-smoking adults.

## READY TO TAKE THE NEXT STEP?

### Help Is Available

**QuitNow Services** is a set of clinically proven 24/7 smoking cessation programs, available FREE to all British Columbians. **QuitNow.ca** is an internet-based program, and QuitNow by Phone – 1-877-455-2233 is staffed by registered nurses available to assist people in over 130 languages.

### ActNow BC [www.actnowbc.gov.bc.ca](http://www.actnowbc.gov.bc.ca)

**ActNow BC's** website contains informative tip sheets on smoking cessation and offers sound advice on healthy eating for ex-smokers and those ready to quit.

### Talk to someone who cares

Your doctor and pharmacist can discuss with you prescription and over the counter cessation aids.

**If you quit for at least 8 weeks before your surgery, you may shorten your hospital stay!**