

The Wellness Beat

Windsor-Essex Cardiac Wellness Centre newsletter

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WINDSOR
REGIONAL
HOSPITAL
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LEAMINGTON
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SMOKING CESSATION

By Sandra Renaud, RN



You smoke for many reasons. It may be a habit or an addiction, or both. It may help you relax, give you energy, give you time to yourself, or distract you from stress. It may be something you share with others. You may even think it helps to control your weight.

Whatever it may give you, smoking takes away much more. It seriously harms your health each time you light up. It can lead to deadly cancers, chronic lung and heart disease, and an early painful death. These are proven facts. It's not just about your health. Quitting will give you a real and powerful sense of self-control ... right now!

Smoking is probably something you do without thinking. If you're like most smokers, you probably reach for a cigarette automatically when you do or feel certain things, when you're with other smokers, or as part

of your daily routines.

Learn your smoking "triggers"

When do you routinely smoke? Drinking coffee or alcohol, relaxing after work or a meal, talking on the phone, driving, or feeling stressed or angry are common smoking "triggers" - things that may make you want to smoke. Break the connection between smoking and your routines. Anticipate your triggers. Try to delay lighting up by keeping your hands and mouth busy with other things. Drink a glass of cold water, brush your teeth, or enjoy a low-calorie snack. Stretch, take a walk, or talk with a nonsmoking friend.

You can break your nicotine addiction. Your brain has learned to depend on nicotine. This highly addictive chemical in tobacco makes you feel energized, alert or calm. Over time, your brain gets used to it. It thinks the extra stimulation is normal. So when nicotine leaves your system, soon after smoking, your brain begins to crave it. You feel uncomfortable without it and get the urge to smoke again. As you smoke less, your brain also gets used to having

less nicotine. You may get cravings or feel irritable or "down" for a while, but these things never last long. The more cravings you resist, the fewer you will have. They will soon be much shorter and weaker.

The four "Ds"

- **Delay** lighting up when you get the urge to smoke.
- **Distract** yourself until the craving stops with thoughts and activities that take your mind off smoking.
- **Drink** water to occupy your hands and mouth.
- **Deep breathing** will help you stay focused and relaxed. It's simple and it works!

It's okay to have doubts

Quitting smoking is about making a change in your life. It's about walking away from something that may have been a part of your life for a long time - something you've come to depend on. You may be worried about how hard it might be, about reactions from friends who still smoke, about giving up time to yourself, about gaining weight, or even about losing a part of who you are. It's normal to have

doubts. Every challenge has a solution. Every step is a success.

Set a date to quit!

Plan to get support! Choose a quit buddy. Call a toll-free quit line (1-877-513-5333) for help and support or visit the Internet at www.smokershelpline.ca. Consider nicotine replacement therapy or other medications. Yes, even with a history of heart disease it is safe for you to use nicotine replacement products such as gum, a patch, an inhaler or lozenges. If you continue to smoke you will get nicotine, as well as thousands of other chemicals. Using nicotine replacement therapy gives you a controlled amount of nicotine (in gradually reduced amounts). There are currently two medications on the market to help with smoking cessation; Bupropion and Champix, both are available by prescription. Choose the quit method that's right for you. Create your own action plan. ♥

Reference: Health Canada On the Road to Quitting Guide to becoming a non-smoker. www.gosmokefree.ca

Participant Profile: Kenneth Olsen—success story

By Stephanie Driedger, BHK

The CWC has seen many participants with heart disease participate in its cardiac rehabilitation program — male and female, young and old, working and retired, etc. In attempt to provide our readers with a glimpse of this wide range of participants and heart histories, the Participant Profile will hopefully allow you, the reader, to relate (physically or emotionally) to a profile in one way or another.

If you are a current smoker working to quit, here is some food for thought. According to the Heart and Stroke Foundation, smoking is the single most important cause of preventable illness and premature death in Canada, and heart disease rates are 70% higher for smokers than non-smokers. Furthermore, smoking will account for 50% of deaths in people before the age of 70 among current 15-year-old smokers.

Ken Olsen, a graduate of our CWC program, was aware of the life-threatening risks associated with smoking. However, it was not until August 25th, 2006, while lying in the hospital bed after being diagnosed with a heart attack, that he handed his son his cigarettes and said, "Take these away. I don't need them anymore." That was the last day Ken ever touched a cigarette.

Ken was the first of five family members to survive a heart attack

Although Ken attempted to quit 4-5 times prior to his heart event, he could not withstand the cravings for more than two weeks. Being the first of five family members to survive a

heart attack, Ken knew he needed to quit smoking.

After 30 years of smoking, Ken decided to quit "cold turkey" even though for years he struggled with this notion thinking it was an impossible feat. His wife also quit smoking after 6 weeks of nicotine replacement therapy, which Ken found helpful to maintain his smoking cessation goals.



Surviving a heart attack was Ken Olsen's motivation to quit smoking and take control of his weight.

"The [CWC program] was also very helpful," he said. "By exercising and eating healthier, it makes you want to be a better, healthier person." Ken also found the CWC's nurse educator, Sandy Renaud, and her smoking cessation session very helpful. "Really we all know what to do to quit smoking... you guys are there for the push."

Ken is often around smokers at work. He says, "It makes it easier to quit smoking now that smoking is not allowed in any buildings and I would just stay away from the smoking areas at

work so that I wouldn't be tempted. The restrictions on smoking now almost make you feel bad to be a smoker." To alleviate cravings, Ken would sip on water or chew gum. He avoids mint gum, however, claiming it made his cravings for cigarettes worse.

Not only did Ken quit smoking after his heart attack, he also lost 30 pounds. Ken transformed his former sedentary lifestyle to include five days of cardiovascular exercise and three days of resistance training per week. He is also eating heart healthy and watching his portion control.

Achieve your own goals

How can you achieve your own goals towards smoking cessation, weight loss or other modifiable risk factors? "Don't give up," Ken states, "I never thought I'd quit smoking." He achieved his goals by taking small steps. "I don't think I could have ever quit smoking, changed my eating habits and started exercising all at the same time."

Once you have achieved your goals of a healthier lifestyle, there is no reason to stop setting goals. The Cardiac Wellness Centre recommends setting goals for maintenance and adhering to your achievements. Ken states, "I know I'm not perfect; there's always room for improvement."

Congratulations, Ken, on your many lifestyle changes – from your Cardiac Wellness team. ♥

Fundraising updates

“An Evening of Heart and Enchantment” Dinner, Fashion Show & Silent Auction, held every year in February to commemorate Heart Month, is a great opportunity to see current participants outside of the CWC and to reunite with program graduates. The gala sells out every year, including this year with over 800 people in attendance. Over \$54,000 was raised for the CWC.

The winner of this year's Lumley Award, which recognizes volunteer excellence at the CWC, was Pat Montaleone. Pat volunteered at the CWC for six years and always went above and beyond expectations by helping with all CWC fundraisers. Pat will begin medical school at the University of Western Ontario in September 2007. Best of luck, Pat, from your friends at the CWC!

The 8th annual, **“Path to a Better Heart Walk/Run”** on May

6th, 2007 saw a record number of people - 564 walkers and runners participated and 65 children participated in the “Kids Dash”. Over \$8,000 was raised for the CWC.

From January 2007 through January 2008, a portion of the proceeds from the monthly **Caboto Charity Pasta Nites** will go towards the CWC. (Caboto Club is located on 2175 Parent.)

Pasta dinners are held on the first Wednesday of every month from 4:30-7:30 p.m.; \$7.50 adult, \$5.00 children, \$8.00 take-out.

The CWC is organizing summer-time **“Fun Walks”** on July 27th and August 31st at 7:00 p.m. on the Ganatchio Trail at Sandpoint Beach.

Our goal is to encourage participants and graduates to exercise. Encourage friends and family to come — all fitness levels are welcome! We also hope to motivate people to attend our

“Walk of Life for Cardiac Rehabilitation” in September.

Every year, the CWC partners with the Canadian Cardiac Rehabilitation Foundation (CCRF) for the **“Walk of Life for Cardiac Rehabilitation”**. CCRF then distributes all fund-raised dollars amongst programs depending on each site's event success. In other words, the more walkers in attendance and dollars raised per site means more money for that site from the CCRF.

The CWC's “Walk of Life for Cardiac Rehabilitation” will occur on Friday, September 7th, 2007 on the Ganatchio Trail at Sandpoint Beach. Please come out to support the CWC and walk for a cause that we hope you believe in too! Pledge forms are available at the CWC. After the walk, food will be provided by Koolini's Eatery.

For more fundraising information, call our **CWC Hotline at (519) 254-5577 ext. 72556**.

Giving back to Cardiac Wellness

It is a common misconception that the Cardiac Wellness Centre (CWC) is funded by the Heart and Stroke Foundation. In reality, the CWC receives its funding annually from the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care; yet this amount only covers operational costs (e.g., wages, supplies, etc.).

Additional fundraising dollars are required to help the CWC upgrade its facility with a larger exercise area to help more local residents recover after their cardiac event. Moreover, a larger facility would allow participants to continue coming after graduation as part of the CWC's maintenance program, “Wellness Club”. Contributions would also help with pur-

chasing new exercise machines and strength training equipment.

If you feel you have benefited from your experience at the CWC and would like to see it continue to help others in the future, there are many ways to help and “give back”:

Make a donation —any amount helps! Cheques can be made payable to “Windsor-Essex Cardiac Wellness Centre”.

Donate in memory—remember CWC when honouring a lost family member or friend. Cheques can be made payable to “Windsor-Essex Cardiac Wellness Centre”.

Purchase CWC apparel—show

Windsor our “Wellness Willy” logo found on T-shirts, golf shirts and hats. Help us raise awareness about our program.

Fundraise—organize or host a fundraiser (i.e., garage sale) or help us prepare for our fundraising events.

Become a corporate sponsor—advertise your company or business at CWC fundraisers.

Spread the word—talk to family, friends, or employers about your experience. Ask if they want to be a corporate sponsor at any one of our CWC fundraisers! ♥

Smoking cessation: Dealing with food cravings and weight gain

If you're worried about gaining weight after smoking cessation, you'll be happy to read that you would have to gain 100 pounds



to develop the same health risk that smoking creates. Weight gain after quitting actually averages around 5

to 7 pounds; only 5% of people gain more than 20 pounds.

Nicotine from cigarettes suppresses normal appetite signals. Therefore, it is important to learn to "listen to your body" for true signals of hunger and fullness.

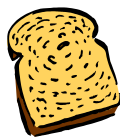
Here are some tips to prevent weight gain:

- **Eat smaller, more frequent snacks** throughout the day to prevent you from getting too hungry. Try not to go longer than 2 to 4 hours without a meal or snack. Cravings gradually disappear as eating patterns normalize.
- **Eat breakfast** — it is critical to stabilize brain chemistry and prevent carbohydrate cravings late in the day.
- **Include a little fat or healthy oils in your meals.** Since ex-smokers tend to crave fats and sweets, this tip will keep you from feeling hungry again soon.
- **Emphasize unprocessed, whole foods** (e.g., whole grains and fresh fruit). These foods will keep your blood sugar stable and help your mood, too.

- **Respond to your cravings with small portions.** Remember, restricting food triggers binge-eating and causes guilt. Don't put foods in "good" and "bad" categories.
- **Organize your snacks the night before** to reduce the chance of eating the first thing you see or smell when your cravings arise.
- **Choose snacks that contain protein, carbohydrates and fat.** This can help slow down the food's digestion and absorption—possibly providing you with a longer feeling of fullness. Don't choose snacks full of empty calories (e.g., diet pop).

Here is a brief list of examples of snacks under 100 calories:

- 1 small apple and 1 ounce of reduced-fat Swiss cheese
- 3/4 cup seedless grapes
- 1/2 a sandwich
- 1 piece of whole wheat toast with peanut butter



- 100 calorie mini bag of popcorn
- 100 calorie bag "Thinsations" snacks



- Cut up veggies with low-fat dip or hummus
- Sugar-free Jell-o with fruit cocktail
- 1 cup of low-fat yogurt



Here are some other tips to try to help deal with food cravings:

- **Drink plenty of water.** It will flush the nicotine out of your system and help you feel better.
- **Stay active** — take a shower, breathe deeply, walk or exercise. Activities like these will give you energy and make you feel healthier and more relaxed—making smoking less appealing.
- **Stimulating your mouth can help you beat the urge.** Chew on a toothpick, munch on raw vegetables, drink a glass of ice water or brush your teeth.
- **Occupy your hands.** Doodle, fidget with a paper clip, do a crossword or jigsaw puzzle.
- **Set up clean zones.** Clean up any places you used to smoke, such as your car or bedroom, and make them off-limits to smoking by anyone.
- **Reward yourself.** See a movie, buy a new outfit or start a savings account with the money you are saving. ♥



References:

1. http://www.brown.edu/Student_Services/Health_Services/Health_Education/atod/tob_cessation.htm
2. <http://ww2.heartandstroke.ca/Page.asp?PageID=33&ArticleID=789&Src=living&From=SubCategory>

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- Stop your newsletter subscription, or
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Send us an email at carwell@wrh.on.ca using the subject heading, "CWC Newsletter" to receive the newsletter via e-mail.



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