



## Challenges with Secondhand Smoke and How to Deal with Them

It may be difficult to reduce or eliminate secondhand smoke from your home and car. It is a good idea to talk about the reasons why and try to plan how to deal with them ahead of time.

Here are some examples:

### **1) Guests, partners and relatives want to smoke inside the home.**

It can be difficult or uncomfortable to ask people visiting your home to smoke outside. You might want to tell them before they arrive that you have a smoke-free home. Most people are used to smoke-free environments. Give them a comfortable place to smoke outside and thank them for helping out.

### **2) You have young children you need to keep an eye on.**

It can be hard to get outside when you are caring for young children. Try to get an older sibling, partner or neighbour to watch younger children while you are outside smoking. You can also take your children outside with you and smoke away from them. Plan to go outside with your children to do an activity such as going to the park, building a snow fort, rock collecting, or running through a sprinkler.

### **3) It's too cold, hot, rainy, or snowy.**

Plan for weather that makes you feel like staying inside.

If it is cold:

- Wear a warm coat.
- Wear a hat and scarf.
- Make a hot drink like tea or hot chocolate when you get back inside.

If it is rainy or snowy:

- Stand under an overhead shelter.
- Use a good, strong umbrella.

If it is too hot:

- Sit in the shade.
- Put your feet in water.
- Wear clothes that help you stay cool.

Plan for bad weather and don't let it stop you from following your plan.

### **4) You feel stressed and find it difficult to get outside to smoke.**

Many people who smoke feel that smoking helps with stress and that the more stress they are under, the more they want to smoke. Remind yourself of the reasons why you decided to reduce or quit smoking in your home and car. Motivate yourself by thinking about these reasons and find other ways to relax. For more information, and for some tips on how to deal with stress, you can [read more about dealing with stress on our website](#).



**5) A family member sees someone else have a cigarette in the car or house.**

Sometimes rules are broken. You or someone in your family could slip and smoke inside. If another family member sees, they may get upset or think the smoke-free rules have changed. Try talking openly and honestly about why the slip happened and how you can work together to prevent them from happening in the future. Slips are normal, but when they happen, it is a good idea to remind everyone of your plan.

**6) You drive to work every day and it is hard not to smoke in your car because your workplace is smoke-free.**

It can be really difficult to change routines. Many people are used to smoking in the car when they drive and they really enjoy it. It can also be difficult because most workplaces are smoke-free. Instead of smoking in your car, try to leave home a few minutes earlier than usual to give yourself time for a cigarette outside before going into work. Go for a long walk on your lunch to get to a place where you can smoke and to get some exercise.

**7) It is not safe to go outside to smoke at night.**

Some people may not feel safe going outside at night. If this is a concern, try to reduce smoking at night or set a time in the evening to have your last cigarette before it gets dark. If you have to go outside, try to find a friend or family member who can go outside with you so that you are not alone. Let someone know where you will be when you go out. Smoke in places where other people are around, close to buildings and that have lights. Carry a cell phone with you and don't use earphones or other distractions.

Adapted from Health Canada's resource: *Make your home and car smoke-free: A guide to protecting your family from second-hand smoke* (2006). <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hc-ps/pubs/tobac-tabac/second-guide/index-eng.php>