



First Nations Health Authority  
Health through wellness

# COVID-19 - Smoking and Vaping: What's the Risk?

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



### **Do people who smoke have a higher chance of developing severe complications if they become infected with COVID-19?**

- Yes. People who smoke, especially those who have respiratory, cardiovascular or other conditions caused by smoking, seem to be at higher risk of developing severe symptoms of COVID-19 infection, requiring ICU admission, and/or requiring mechanical ventilation.
- As smoking adversely affects the immune system, it decreases the body's natural ability to heal from infections and increases the risk of lower respiratory tract infection, including COVID-19.

### **Is there a link between vaping and COVID-19?**

- Vaping can cause lung damage as well as other respiratory health problems, and may put you at higher risk for developing severe COVID-19 symptoms.
- Because vaping is a new phenomenon, and we do not yet know all the long-term effects or how it correlates with COVID-19, it is best to stay away from vaping or make your best attempts to significantly reduce your use.

**NOTE:** Research is ongoing into the negative impacts of smoking and vaping on people who develop COVID-19 illness. We will have more information to share as research develops.

## How can I lower my risk of getting severe COVID-19 signs and symptoms in relation to smoking and vaping use?

- Good respiratory and cardiovascular health is essential for COVID-19 patients to positively respond to medical treatment and successfully recover from the disease.
- Quitting or reducing smoking and vaping is the best thing you can do to protect your respiratory and cardiovascular health at this time.
- Ensure there are smoke- and vapour-free spaces in the community, thus reducing second-hand smoke/vapour exposure.

- Do not smoke or vape around Elders, those with chronic illness, or those who are immunosuppressed (this includes pregnant women); these groups are at the highest risk of having poor outcomes related to COVID-19 infection.
- Do not share your smoke or vape with anyone. Doing so can transfer the virus to others.
- Remember physical distancing. Stay at least two metres (six feet) apart if smoking or vaping in a group.

**NOTE:** Even if you are not in the “higher risk” category, it is important to remember that there is still risk for everyone, even young, healthy people.

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## Where can I get more information and support?

We know it isn't easy to quit; these are stressful times, and stress causes us to want to smoke or vape even more. But please understand that it's important to try to quit or at least reduce at this time. Try using our [Land-Based Quit Tips](#) to help reduce your stress and anxiety:



**Be kind to Yourself**



**Drink Medicinal Teas**



**Do a Traditional Craft or Activity**



**Ask the Creator For Strength**

**For more tips and support for quitting or reducing, visit:**

**First Nations Health Authority:**  
[www.fnha.ca/respectingtobacco](http://www.fnha.ca/respectingtobacco)

**QuitNow BC:**  
[www.quitnow.ca](http://www.quitnow.ca) or call 1-877-455-2233

**For more information on COVID-19:**

**First Nations Health Authority:**  
[www.fnha.ca/coronavirus](http://www.fnha.ca/coronavirus)

**BC Lung Association:**  
[www.bc.lung.ca/how-we-can-help/covid-19](http://www.bc.lung.ca/how-we-can-help/covid-19)

**BC Centre for Disease Control:**  
[covid-19.bccdc.ca](http://covid-19.bccdc.ca)