

“Smoke is Smoke”

National Non-Smoking Week 2018

Submitted By:

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National Non-Smoking Week (NNSW) has been observed during the third week in January for more than 35 years. On January 21-27, one of the most important events in Canada’s ongoing health education efforts in the prevention and reduction of tobacco use will be promoted, with Weedless Wednesday on the 23rd of January.

Weedless Wednesday focuses on the benefits of cessation and promotes a “one day at a time” approach to quitting smoking – a concept appealing to many smokers who may be discouraged when contemplating a week or perhaps a lifetime without cigarettes. Coping with one smoke-free day is manageable, and can contribute to small successes that lead to the decision of quitting long-term.

This year’s theme “Smoke is Smoke” reinforces the message that there is no safe levels of second-hand smoke. Although the health risks associated with second-hand smoke from tobacco cigarettes are well known, many are unaware of the exposure from cannabis or a hookah (water) pipe.

Hookah

A hookah or water pipe is a device used to smoke tobacco and shisha which is a non-tobacco herbal product. According to the World Health Organization, both products can produce toxic chemicals such as carbon monoxide and ultrafine particles. However, not only does shisha give off chemicals, but so does the burning charcoal used to heat the shisha. It produces very high levels of heavy metals and cancer causing chemicals.

Cannabis

Smoke from cannabis (marijuana) has been shown to have many of the same toxic chemicals as tobacco. It also contains THC, a chemical responsible for the “high” experienced by users. Second hand smoke could negatively affect the health of those exposed (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention).

Limiting exposure to all sources of smoke (tobacco, shisha and cannabis) is the best way to protect yourself and others from the harmful effects.

- Avoid places where you might be exposed to any kind of second-hand smoke
- Make your home and car smoke-free
- Avoid smoking tobacco, herbal shisha or cannabis around children, those pregnant, older adults and those with conditions such as asthma, lung or heart disease
- If you smoke, think about quitting

The Newfoundland and Labrador Smokers' Helpline (SHL) is a free, confidential counseling service available to individuals who want to quit smoking and stay smoke-free. SHL staff are there to provide support to help motivate you to take action, provide information on proven quit methods, suggest practical tips that have worked for others and to offer assistance for staying smoke-free. There's no pressure to quit right away, rather, helpful information and tools for when an individual is ready. Contact the Smokers' Helpline at 1-800-363-5864 or visit them online at: www.smokershelp.net

National Non-Smoking Week and Weedless Wednesday is an opportunity to remind residents of Northern Newfoundland and Labrador that Labrador-Grenfell Health properties are smoke-free. This is a policy designed to protect others and to provide a smoke free environment because there is no safe level of exposure to second-hand smoke. Please contact your local health professional for more information.

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