



Press release
For immediate release

With the *Challenge*, quitting smoking is worth celebrating! Registration at quitchallenge.ca until February 6

Montréal, January 2, 2023 – The *Quit to Win! Challenge* is back for the new year with its positive and motivating approach. For the 24th year in a row, the *Challenge* invites smokers who want to quit to commit to not smoking for 6 weeks, from February 6 to March 19, 2023. This first goal is realistic for most smokers while being significant, since quitting for 6 weeks increases by 6 the chances of quitting for good. Registration at quitchallenge.ca.

From prevention to celebration!

“In Quebec, the proportion of smokers is 13.3%, which represents nearly one million people. We need to continue our fight against smoking to contribute to the prevention of several chronic diseases, such as certain cancers and heart and lung diseases. Prevention must be at the heart of our actions and part of the solution to improve access to our health network. The *Quit to Win! Challenge* is an essential initiative that has a proven track record in supporting Quebec smokers who want to quit, and therefore making it possible for them to live better and longer,” states Christian Dubé, Health Minister.

Because smoking is more than just a simple habit, but rather a nicotine addiction, it is hard to quit, and it often takes several attempts. But success comes with pride, and we want to celebrate that! The new *Challenge* concept inspires smokers to butt out by reminding them that quitting is cause for celebration. Newfound freedom, better health, more energy and savings... Our perseverance and all the small victories along the way are also worth celebrating, and we must not forget to celebrate OURSELVES by focusing on self-care.

Teaming up with your pharmacist

Since quitting smoking may involve overcoming both a physical and a psychological dependence, smokers are encouraged to use various tools to increase their chances of success. One recommended winning strategy is to consult a health professional, namely their pharmacist, who can advise them at every step of their cessation journey, from preparation to maintenance. Pharmacists can develop a personalized quit plan and prescribe, as needed, a smoking cessation aid, including prescription medication. “It is well known that one of the main reasons why smokers relapse is because they return to smoking as a crutch to relieve the discomfort associated with stress, cravings, and nicotine withdrawal. It is essential to guide them towards the right tools to face these obstacles if we want them to succeed in quitting. Pharmacists, as local health professionals, are well placed to support them,” explains pharmacist Alexandre Chagnon, director of the digital health technology program at Laval University and the *Challenge*’s spokesperson.

Quitting is possible with support

In addition to being able to rely on strength in numbers as thousands of Quebecers will take up the *Challenge* at the same time, participants will also have access to a range of free support tools during and after the 6 weeks:

- The quitchallenge.ca website and a personal profile accessible upon registration
- Encouragement emails
- The Facebook and Instagram communities
- The free, confidential I QUIT NOW services: in person at the Quit Smoking Centres, by phone at 1-866-527-7383, online at the I QUIT NOW website (tobaccofreequebec.ca), or by text through the SMAT text messaging service

Moreover, participants can talk to their pharmacist owner affiliated to Jean Coutu, proud partner of the *Challenge*, at any time to get help during their cessation process.

And for some added motivation, a grand prize of \$5000 in cash, offered by the *Challenge*, will be drawn among all the participants who succeeded in not smoking for 6 weeks. Something to celebrate!

Registration at quitchallenge.ca until February 6, 2023.

About the *Quit to Win! Challenge*

The *Quit to Win! Challenge* is a province-wide campaign that provides free support to smokers who want to quit through a collective challenge. Launched in 2000 by Capsana, the *Challenge* is carried out in partnership with several public and private organizations, namely the Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux, Quebec's Directions régionales de santé publique, the Canadian Cancer Society, and the Jean Coutu Group. To find out more, visit quitchallenge.ca.

About Capsana

Capsana is a social enterprise owned by the ÉPIC Foundation, which is associated with the Montreal Heart Institute, and by the Fondation PSI. Its mission is to help individuals take an active role in their health. To find out more, visit capsana.ca.

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