

Leave the pack behind

January 17-23 is National Non-Smoking Week and Hastings Prince Edward Public Health, in partnership with the provincial organization Leave The Pack Behind, is hosting the annual "wouldrather" contest for young adults in the region. Aimed at motivating young adults to quit smoking, reduce their smoking, or stay smoke-free, the six-week contest is an important strategy to help tackle the high rates of smoking among young adults. Although quitting smoking is something that may find challenging, it's much easier to stop nowadays with options like e-cigarettes available. Not only are they healthier, but with the various flavours available, such as this [great tasting menthol vape juices](#), they're often more attractive than regular tobacco. However, there's no denying that the process is still difficult, especially for people who want to stop smoking altogether, including vaping. Two grand prizes of \$2,500 are available to be won, as well as smaller cash awards and other prizes.

"According to the Canadian Community Health Survey, the smoking rate amongst young adults aged 20 to 34 in Hastings and Prince Edward Counties in 2014 was 52.2 per cent compared to 22.3 per cent provincially," notes David Patterson, health promoter in the tobacco program at Hastings Prince Edward Public Health. "Although we do have to read these numbers with caution, we can say for certain that our area is higher than the provincial average in most smoking categories. We host weekly smoking cessation programs, but they aren't well attended by the young adult population. This contest is a great fit for those who don't traditionally seek out support for quitting."

Last year, more than 13,000 young adults entered the contest, which has proven to help smokers quit. Did you realise that there are loads of different ways to stop smoking? Like you could look at using a nicotine patch to help you, you could try using a diffuser as this can trick the body into thinking you are smoking without actually doing so, using CBD oil can be an effective choice of oil to use, [shop now!](#) or you could even consider vaping instead, as this is easier then going cold turkey straight away. Using a [vaporisateur](#), also known as a vaporizer, is much better for your health than using a cigarette. It can also work a little more affordable than smoking too. If this is something that interests you then you could consider using something like this [coupon for vapordna](#) to help you save a bit as you start your journey to quitting smoking for good. Recent research shows that up to 20 per cent of young adults who participate in "wouldrather..." will quit smoking. Because not everyone is ready to quit right now, the "wouldrather..." contest offers participants the opportunity to choose from one of four categories.

Young adults who smoke can quit smoking all together (Quit For Good); cut their smoking in half (Keep The Count); or refrain from smoking any time they are socializing and drinking alcohol (Party Without The Smoke). Non-smokers and ex-smokers can also enter the contest by pledging to renew their decision to stay smoke-free (Don't Start and Win).

To participate in the six-week contest beginning Jan. 25, Ontario young adults between the ages of 18 to 29 or anyone enrolled at a publicly funded post-secondary institution can sign up at www.wouldrather.ca until Jan. 24 at 11:59 p.m.

The Tobacco Control Team will be taking over public health's Facebook and Twitter accounts over the course of the week, and they are encouraging the public to join the discussion. Using the hash tag #HPEQuitSmoking, they will be sharing lots of useful links, videos, pictures and resources aimed at educating, facilitating discussion, and helping those who are struggling with the addiction. "When it comes down to it, everyone has been impacted by the consequences of smoking in one way or another: It's an addictive product that kills half of its users when used as intended," says Patterson. "We have a duty to try and minimize or eliminate the harm associated with the use of tobacco."

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