

# STOPPING SMOKING

**Giving up smoking is one of the best things you can do for your health. This factsheet explains the benefits of stopping smoking and provides tips and advice to help you stop.**

Cigarettes contain a substance called nicotine which is what makes them highly addictive. Around 1 in 5 adults in Scotland smoke. Giving up can be hard, but there is a lot of support to help you quit and it is never too late to stop smoking.

## HOW DOES SMOKING AFFECT MY HEALTH?

Smoking significantly increases the chances of developing serious health conditions such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and other chest conditions. Smoking can also damage your heart and your blood circulation, increasing the risk of conditions such as coronary heart disease, heart attack and stroke. The toxins from cigarette smoke enter your blood causing changes to your body. These changes increase the chances of your arteries narrowing, clots forming and raising your blood pressure and heart rate, all of which can contribute to a heart attack or stroke. If you smoke 20 cigarettes a day, you are six times more likely to have a stroke compared with a non-smoker. Smokers also have nearly twice the risk of having a heart attack compared with someone who has never smoked. By quitting smoking, you will also reduce your risk of getting smoking-related cancers.

## WHY SHOULD I STOP SMOKING?

There are many different reasons why it's worth stopping smoking. Your breathing and general fitness will improve as well as the appearance of your skin and teeth. Your sense of taste will return and you will enjoy the taste of food more. Your fertility levels will also improve, along with the chances of having a healthy pregnancy and baby.

If you have an existing chest condition stopping smoking can slow down the decline in your lung function and make breathing easier. It will also make your inhalers work better as well as protect your family from second-hand smoke. If you have children, you will reduce the chances of them suffering from bronchitis, pneumonia, asthma, meningitis and ear infections.



FACTSHEET

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You may decide to stop smoking for family reasons, to be a good role model for your children or grandchildren, to be more active, to be healthier or to have more money. Whatever the reasons might be, the good news is that from the moment you stop smoking the risks to your health start to decline.

### It will improve your health

There are short-term and long-term health benefits when you stop smoking.

After 20 minutes

Your blood pressure and pulse improve.

After 8 hours

Oxygen levels in the blood improve.

After 1 day

Your lungs start to clear out mucus and other smoking debris.

After 2 days

Carbon monoxide will be eliminated from your body. There is no nicotine in your body and your ability to taste and smell is improved.

After 3 days

Breathing becomes easier as your bronchial tubes begin to relax. Energy levels should increase.

After 2 weeks

Your circulation begins to improve.

After 3 months

Coughs, wheezing and breathing problems improve.

After 9 months

Lung function can improve by up to 10%.

After 1 year

Your risk of heart disease is about half that of a person who is still smoking.

After 5 years

Your risk of stroke is reduced to the same as someone who has never smoked.

After 10 years

Your risk of lung cancer falls to half of that of a person who is still smoking.

After 15 years

Your risk of heart attack falls to the same as someone who has never smoked.

### It will improve your wealth

Stopping smoking will save you money. If you smoked 20 cigarettes a day and pay £8.50 per packet you could save £255 a month. That would mean in a year you could save around £3,100 by not smoking. Just think of the things that money could be spent on – holidays, new car, home improvements. You'll also save money in other ways. Life, home and car insurance can all be cheaper when you're a non-smoker.

### For a 20-a-day smoker, in

- 1 day:** you'll have enough money to buy a few magazines, download some music or rent a movie
- 1 week:** you could have enough money for a new pair of shoes, or a facial, a cheap train ticket, a DVD box set, a day out with your family.
- 1 month:** you could save enough for a shopping spree, a flight to Europe or premiership football tickets.
- 3 months:** you could afford two weeks in the sun, a new laptop, or the latest flat screen TV.
- 6 months:** you'll have saved enough for a football season ticket, a family holiday, your own home cinema.
- 1 year:** you'll be able to afford a new kitchen, flash designer jewellery, a car!

There is an online cost calculator at [www.canstopsmoking.com](http://www.canstopsmoking.com) to help you find out how much smoking is costing you financially.

## HOW CAN I PREPARE MYSELF TO STOP SMOKING?

- **Start planning**

Decide on a date to stop smoking.

Think about the times of day and activities you associate with smoking and how you can avoid these. For example, if you smoke first thing in the morning, change your morning routine. If you smoke during social occasions, plan not to go to the outdoor smoking area when socialising.

Break the link between the situation and your smoking. Find alternatives instead such as going for a walk, starting something new, changing your routine.

- **List the reasons you want to stop smoking**

Write down why you want to stop as this will help focus your mind and boost your willpower. Make sure you are in the right mindset and are 100% committed to giving up smoking before you start.

- **Reward yourself**

Plan rewards to help you achieve individual goals such as for the end of day one, week one and so on.

## WHO CAN HELP ME QUIT SMOKING?

In Scotland, support to stop smoking from your local NHS stop smoking service is free. Research shows you are more than four times more likely to succeed at stopping if you have specialist support. There are a range of stop smoking services and help available including:

- **NHS stop smoking services**

NHS stop smoking services are available throughout Scotland in a variety of locations and at various times, including daytime and evening. These services include: group or drop-in support (in local community venues), one-to-one support from your local pharmacy, hospital in-patient support, home visits if you are housebound and apps for your smart phone. For more information on what is available in your local area call **Smokeline free on 0800 848484** (7 days a week 8am to 10pm) or visit **[www.canstopsmoking.com](http://www.canstopsmoking.com)**.

- **Your GP or pharmacist**

Your GP or local pharmacist can offer you help and advice to help you quit. He or she can recommend several different stop smoking treatments depending on your personal preference and whether you have used any before.

- **Family and friends**

Help and encouragement from family and friends when you are attempting to stop smoking can really make a difference.

## WHAT MEDICINES CAN HELP ME STOP SMOKING?

There are different types of stop smoking medication such as nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) or medicines such as bupropion (Zyban®) or varenicline (Champix®). You can discuss what products may be best for you with your doctor or local stop smoking advisor.

- **Nicotine replacement therapy (NRT)**

After smoking for a while, your body gets used to regular doses of nicotine from your cigarettes. When you stop smoking you can suffer withdrawal symptoms from this leading to bad moods, feeling irritable, difficulty concentrating and cravings.

NRT works by giving you control of your craving for nicotine by gradually reducing the amount of nicotine in your body. It releases nicotine steadily into your bloodstream at much lower levels than in a cigarette without the other harmful chemicals in cigarette smoke. NRT comes in different forms including:

- Skin patches
- Chewing gum
- Inhalators (like plastic cigarettes through which nicotine is inhaled)
- Tablets, strips and lozenges
- Nasal or mouth spray

NRT is available from your GP, pharmacist or your local stop smoking services.

- **Varenicline (Champix®)**

Varenicline works by reducing cravings and withdrawal symptoms. It also reduces the satisfaction gained from smoking and makes smoking unpleasant. It should be started about two weeks before your 'quit date' and is usually continued for about 12 weeks. Varenicline should not be used in combination with NRT. It is not suitable for some people so you should discuss whether it is right for you with your GP or healthcare professional.

- **Bupropion (Zyban®)**

Bupropion works by changing your brain's response to nicotine. It makes smoking less pleasurable and reduces cravings. It is usually taken for seven to nine weeks starting one or two weeks before your 'quit date'. Again, bupropion is not suitable for everyone so you should discuss whether it is right for you with your GP or healthcare professional.

## **WHAT CAN I EXPECT WHEN I STOP SMOKING?**

You may experience withdrawal symptoms when you stop smoking and may feel irritable, restless or low in mood. You might also find it difficult to concentrate or sleep or have an increased appetite. These symptoms are temporary and will lessen and disappear over time. The craving for a cigarette usually lasts from three to five minutes but try to wait it out and stay strong. These cravings will become less frequent with every day you stay smoke free.

## **WILL I PUT ON WEIGHT WHEN I STOP SMOKING?**

You may feel hungrier when you stop smoking as nicotine generally reduces feelings of hunger. You may also find that you want to snack more between meals. Nicotine also speeds up the rate at which your body burns calories so you may not burn calories as quickly as before. These are all reasons why you may experience some weight gain as you give up smoking. The typical amount of weight gain is small compared to the health benefits of stopping smoking. If you do find you are putting on weight then there are things you can do to help, such as:

- Avoid snacks such as biscuits and cakes; try fruit or crackers instead
- Reduce alcohol consumption
- Become more active

## **WHAT ABOUT E-CIGARETTES?**

An electronic cigarette (e-cigarette) is a device that allows you to inhale a vapour that typically contains nicotine (at varying levels), a thick colourless liquid called propylene glycol and/or glycerine and flavourings. Because the liquid is heated and not burned and doesn't contain tobacco, it means that the nicotine is delivered without many of the chemicals in cigarette smoke which can cause significant harm and damage to the body.

Because these products are relatively new, there is little evidence on the quality and safety of e-cigarettes and more research on the long-term effects of using e-cigarettes is needed. However, current expert opinion on the evidence which is available suggests they are likely to be much less harmful than smoking tobacco. Speak to your local stop smoking service for more information and advice.



## Top tips to help you stop smoking

- ✓ **Write down the reasons why you want to stop smoking. Keep the list so you can read it when you feel tempted to smoke.**
- ✓ **Prepare to quit – make a plan and set a date to stop.**
- ✓ **If you have tried to quit but it did not work first time, try again using different support.**
- ✓ **Involve family and friends to give you encouragement.**
- ✓ **Make use of the NHS stop smoking services.**
- ✓ **Know the triggers that make you think about cigarettes (for example, first thing in the morning or after a meal).**
- ✓ **Be prepared to change your habits around smoking and plan how to cope if you are with others who are smoking.**
- ✓ **Pick support and therapy that suits you – there are lots to choose from!**
- ✓ **Reward your success – be good to yourself!**
- ✓ **STAY POSITIVE and tell yourself that you are going to succeed.**

If you would like to speak to one of our nurses in confidence,  
please call the Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland Advice Line Nurses

**0808 801 0899**

Free from landlines and mobiles.