

PHC



Smoking

There are 4,000 poisonous chemicals in tobacco smoke which enters the lungs every time you take a drag of your cigarette – these chemicals include:-

- Tar
- Carbon Monoxide
- Acetone
- Ammonia
- Arsenic
- Formaldehyde
- Cadmium
- Shellac
- Benzene
- Cyanide

Smoking is clearly linked to cancer and other medical conditions affecting the lungs and heart.

Years of research have clearly established the links between smoking and cancer. Smoking accounts for more than 1 in 4 UK cancer deaths, and almost a fifth of all cancer cases. The cancers that smoking cause include cancers of the larynx (voice box), oesophagus (gullet), mouth and pharynx (throat), bladder, pancreas, kidney, liver, stomach, bowel, cervix, ovary, nose and sinuses and some types of leukaemia. There is also some evidence that smoking could increase the risk of breast cancer. ***Smoking related deaths are preventable, by giving up smoking.***

Addiction to cigarettes is caused by nicotine. Cigarettes are deliberately designed to give you a fast nicotine hit. It takes less than 20 seconds for the drug to reach your brain from inhaled cigarette smoke. Nicotine causes addiction in much the same way as heroin or cocaine and is just as addictive. ***The reason why most smokers say they want to quit but find it so difficult is due to the nicotine.***



Giving up

Quitting smoking can be difficult, but free services and treatments are available. Smokers are more likely to quit successfully if they get professional support than if they try to go "cold-turkey".

NHS Smoke free has a range of services on offer to help keep you on track, including:

- Stop smoking groups
- One to one counselling

- Prescription medication to help you control the withdrawal symptoms
- Free email and text support programs
- Free app for smartphones.

Nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) is used for 8 to 12 weeks and there are a variety of different products available.

- Nasal spray – provides the quickest and strongest dose of nicotine and can be particularly useful for heavy smokers.
- Lozenges – give short bursts of nicotine over 20 – 30 minutes;
- Inhalers – look like plastic cigarettes and may be helpful if you miss the physical aspect of smoking;
- Patches – slowly release nicotine directly into the bloodstream and can be used all day or also overnight;
- Gum – provides short bursts of nicotine;
- Microtabs – dissolve under the tongue to give a nicotine dose more discreetly.



Other prescription medication

There are two stop smoking medications available on prescription – Champix and Zyban. Both are taken for a week or two before you quit and the following few months.

These medications do not contain nicotine and may improve your chances of quitting more than using NRT. Champix simulates the activity of nicotine in the brain to relieve nicotine cravings. Zyban affects other chemicals in the brain that are involved in transmitting signals and can also help against nicotine addiction.

Do these quit aids really work?

All of the above approved smoking cessation aids have been shown to work in clinical trials.

And you're **over three times more likely to give up** using the prescription medications, along with behavioural support.

Studies have shown that having support from a healthcare professional dramatically improves the chance of quitting smoking. Using NRT alone, without support, did not seem to increase the chances of quitting. So it is advisable to talk to your GP or contact your local NHS Stop Smoking Service.

What other quit methods are there out there?

People use a range of other methods to stop smoking, not all of which are supported by scientific evidence e.g. acupuncture, hypnotherapy and exercise. E-cigarettes have become increasingly popular over the last few years and surveys suggest that e-cigarettes have helped some smokers quit, so there's clearly some potential in these devices. Using e-cigarettes is likely to be safer than continuing to smoke.

NHS Smokefree helps thousands of people quit smoking every year, so if you are looking to quit it is advisable to talk to your doctor or pharmacist, visit NHS Smokefree website <https://quitnow.smokefree.nhs.uk/> or call the NHS Smokefree Helpline



- England: 0800 022 4 332
- Wales: 0800 169 0 169
- Scotland: 0800 84 84 84
- Northern Ireland: 0808 812 8008
- Isle of Man: 01624 642 404