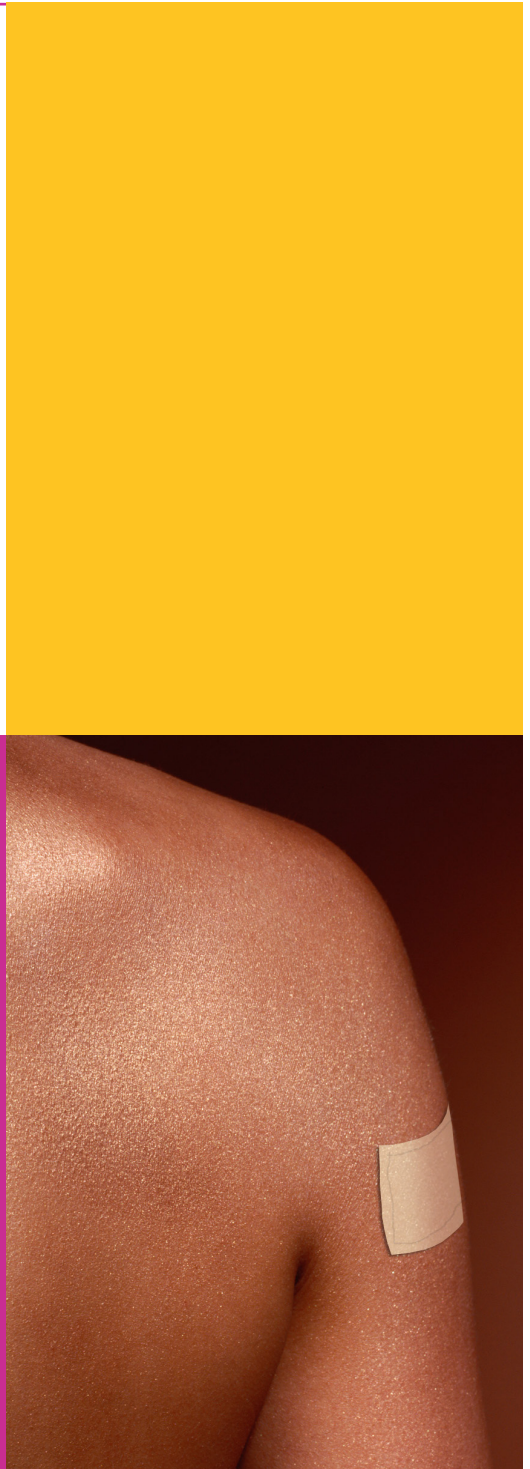




GUIDE TO BEING SMOKE- FREE



Quitting smoking is the single best thing that you can do for your health.

The message that smoking is bad for you is an old one. But despite this, cigarette smoking remains the single biggest cause of preventable death and disease in the UK.

And second hand tobacco smoke causes equally devastating effects to non-smokers. By quitting smoking not only can you drastically improve your own health but also the health of those around you.

Quick fact

Smoking is the biggest single cause of cancer in the world. ²



Why is smoking harmful?

Cigarettes contain around 4,000 chemical compounds and at least 400 toxic substances. When you inhale, a cigarette burns at 700°C at the tip and around 60°C in the core. This heat breaks down the tobacco to produce various toxins. The three main, and most damaging, ingredients are:

- **nicotine** – a fast-acting addictive drug that increases cholesterol levels in your body
- **tar** – a sticky black residue comprising thousands of chemicals. It remains in the smoker's lungs and is a carcinogen (substance that causes cancer)
- **carbon monoxide** – a poisonous gas which enters the blood stream and reduces oxygen, causing breathing problems.

Other harmful chemicals that have been found in cigarettes include:

- **acetone** – used in nail varnish remover
- **ammonia** – found in dry cleaning fluids
- **arsenic** – a deadly poison used in insecticides
- **benzene** – a carcinogenic solvent used in chemical manufacture
- **cadmium** – a poisonous metal found in batteries
- **formaldehyde** – a carcinogenic liquid used to preserve dead bodies. ¹

Effects of smoking on the body

Not surprisingly these chemicals have many harmful effects on the body. Some of the diseases caused by or worsened by smoking include:

- **Lung cancer** – around 30,000 people in the UK die from lung cancer each year and more than 8 in 10 cases are directly related to smoking.
- **Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)** – this is the collective term for a group of conditions that block airflow, making breathing more difficult. COPD claims the lives of about 25,000 people each year in the UK. More than 8 in 10 cases are directly linked to smoking. Sufferers of COPD tend to be ill for many years before they die.
- **Heart disease** – this is the biggest killer in the UK claiming the lives of around 120,000 people each year. Around 1 in 7 of these deaths is caused by smoking.
- **Other cancers** – cancer of the mouth, nose, throat, larynx, pancreas, gullet, bladder, cervix, blood (leukemia) and kidney are also most common in smokers.³

Besides these illnesses smoking causes many other risks:

- Smoking raises blood pressure which can in turn cause hypertension, a risk factor for heart attacks and strokes.
- Sexual problems – smokers are more likely than non-smokers to become impotent. Smoking can also cause fertility problems in both males and females.
- Women who smoke whilst pregnant greatly risk harming their babies and smoking is a major cause of premature birth and low weight at birth.
- Premature ageing of the skin.
- Stained teeth and gums.
- Early menopause – on average women who smoke have menopause two years earlier than non-smokers.

Quick fact

One person dies from lung cancer every fifteen minutes in the UK, of which almost all cases are caused by smoking.⁴



Second hand smoking

Whilst the dangers of smoking are well documented the risks from inhaling other people's smoke are less well known. Passive smoking can also do serious damage to health. In fact, it kills several hundred people each year in the UK. The immediate effects include irritation to the eyes, headaches, sore throats, nausea and asthma attacks.

However, frighteningly, exposure for periods of 30 minutes or more has been shown to reduce coronary blood flow, increasing the risk of angina, heart attacks and strokes.

People who live with heavy smokers are the worst hit – particularly children. Children and babies of smokers have a higher risk of developing asthma, bronchitis, pneumonia, sore throats, coughs and ear infections. They are also more likely to die from cot death and are more likely to both smoke and develop COPD as adults.³

Quick fact

Smoking causes around 120,000 deaths a year in the UK.³

The good news is...

It is never too late to stop smoking to greatly benefit your health. Quitting smoking can have a huge impact on your health and stopping smoking immediately reduces your risk of developing cancer and many other serious diseases.

A person's increased risk of developing a smoking-related disease is directly proportional to the length of time that they continue to smoke, as well as the amount smoked. However, if someone stops smoking then these chances gradually decrease as the damage to the body is repaired. In fact, if you stop smoking in middle age before having cancer or some other serious disease you avoid most of the increased risk of death due to smoking.

The following applies if you have smoked since you were a teenager or young adult:

- If you stop smoking before the age of about 35, your life expectancy is only slightly less than people who have never smoked.
- If you stop smoking before the age of 50, you decrease the risk of dying from smoking-related diseases by 50%.

In fact, beneficial changes can start 20 minutes after your last cigarette:

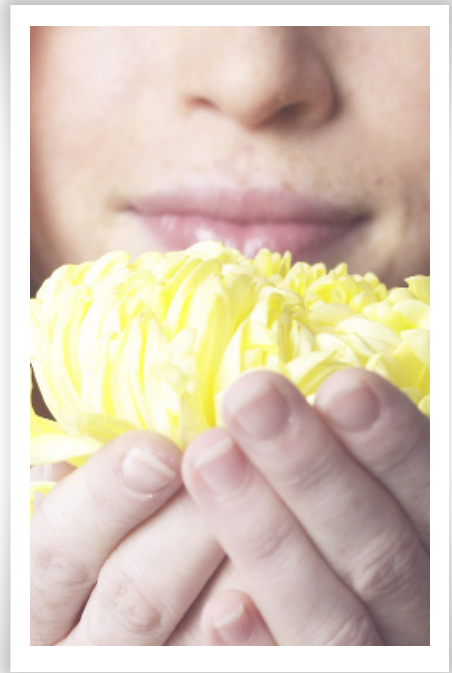
- **20 minutes** - your blood pressure and heart rate return to normal.
- **8 hours** - nicotine and carbon monoxide levels in the blood reduce by half and oxygen levels return to normal.
- **24 hours** - carbon monoxide is eliminated from the body and lungs start to clear out mucus and other debris.
- **48 hours** - no nicotine is left in the body. Sense of taste and smell greatly improve.
- **72 hours** - breathing becomes easier. Bronchial tubes start to relax and energy levels increase.
- **2-12 weeks** - circulation improves.
- **3-9 months** - coughs, wheezing and breathing problems improve as lung function is increased by up to 10%.
- **5 years** - the risk of heart attack falls to about half that of a smoker.
- **10 years** - the risk of lung cancer falls to half that of a smoker and the risk of heart attack falls to the same as someone who has never smoked.
- **15 years** - the risk of heart attack falls to the same as someone who has never smoked.⁶

Quick fact

On average, each cigarette shortens a smoker's life by around 11 minutes.⁵

Other benefits of stopping smoking include:

- improved breathing
- increased energy levels
- chest infections and colds become less frequent
- the smell of stale tobacco disappears from your breath, house, clothes and hair
- improved sense of taste and smell
- improved finances (well over £2,000 per year if you smoke 20 a day)⁶
- freedom from the addiction to tobacco – a sense of achievement.



What better time to give up?

With the smoking ban already in place across the UK, what better time is there to quit smoking?

On July 1st 2007, a new law was introduced to make virtually all enclosed public places and workplaces in the UK smoke free.

Passive smoking is one of the key issues that has led to the introduction of the bans, especially in workplaces. And it's hoped that the introduction of the smoking ban will not only save lives lost through passive smoking, but will also encourage smokers to give up their habit.

Quick fact

Research has shown that smoking reduces life expectancy by 7-8 years.⁷

How is the ban enforced?

Local councils are responsible for enforcing the law throughout the UK. They have worked closely with businesses to help ensure that everyone understands how to comply with the law.

People who smoke in a non-smoking area will be fined £50, reduced to £30 if paid within 15 days. If you don't pay this, take the matter to court or repeatedly ignore the ban you can be fined up to £200.

Businesses that ignore illegal smoking will be fined at least £200 rising up to £2,500 if managers fail to stop smokers lighting up. Members of the public who wish to report a breach of the new law should call 0800 587 1667.⁸



Quitting

Despite the weight of evidence outlining the ill health effects of smoking, most smokers find it very difficult to give up. Don't forget that nicotine is addictive and quitting smoking is often hard. The important thing is that you try and keep trying until you succeed.

Research suggests that smokers should set a date to stop and do their best to quit completely from this point. However, if your best attempt fails, don't rush into quitting again before you are ready, think about what went wrong and try to be prepared next time.

If you want to quit smoking talk to your GP or your pharmacist as there are a number of products that can help you along the way. Nicotine replacement products such as skin patches and gum or the drug Champix, a medicine that's licensed to help smoking cessation, may help.

Quick fact

Half of all smokers die as a result of their habit. ³



You can also obtain more information from the following websites:

www.ash.org.uk

www.nosmokingday.org.uk

www.quit.org.uk

www.giveupsmoking.co.uk

References

¹ <http://www.med.upenn.edu/ttunc/pdf/ingredients.pdf>

² <http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/107443.php>

³ <http://www.patient.co.uk/showdoc/23068824/>

⁴ <http://www.cancerresearchuk.org/cancer-info/healthyliving/smokingandtobacco/howdoweknow/#Deaths>

⁵ <http://www.bmj.com/cgi/content/extract/320/7226/53>

⁶ <http://www.patient.co.uk/showdoc/27001051/>

⁷ http://www.netdoctor.co.uk/health_advice/facts/smokehealth.htm

⁸ <http://www.smokefreeengland.co.uk/>

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