

Stop smoking for good on no smoking day 9 March 2016



If you're a smoker who's keen to quit, you might be waiting for the 'right time' to stop smoking. How about making No Smoking Day, on 9 March, the day you decide to quit for good?

As soon as you stop smoking you'll quickly start to notice a big difference in your health – as well as in your bank balance. What's more, the people you care about (those you smoke around) will be healthier too.

Best of all, when you quit, you'll be much less likely to develop coronary heart disease and cancer.

Smoking facts and myths

Fact: As a smoker you are much more likely to develop coronary heart disease.

Fact: A smoker is nearly twice as likely to have a heart attack than a non-smoker.

Smoking myth 1

Myth: Low-tar cigarettes are safer

Busted: People who smoke so-called light or mild brands are likely to inhale as much tar as smokers of regular brands.

Stop smoking. Start feeling better.

20 minutes	Blood pressure and pulse return to normal
8 hours	Nicotine and carbon monoxide levels in the blood are halved
24 hours	Carbon monoxide has left your body; lungs start to clear out the tar
48 hours	No nicotine left in your body; your senses of taste and smell improve
72 hours	Energy levels increase
Upto 12 weeks	Exercise should get easier
3-9 months	Coughing and wheezing reduces
5 years	Your risk of having a heart attack reduces by half compared to that of a smoker
10 years	Your risk of lung cancer falls to about half that of a smoker

Smoking myth 2

Myth: Smokeless tobacco (chewing dry tobacco, moist oral tobacco or tobacco paste; nasal snuff, e-cigarettes) is a healthier alternative to smoking

Busted: These alternatives may actually increase your chances of dying from cardiovascular diseases. They also increase the risk of mouth cancer, throat cancer and cancer of the oesophagus.

Healthier you. Happier wallet

We have seen how you might start to feel better once you quit. The good news is that you will also notice more money in your pocket.

Quit smoking and you could save yourself...



£50 a week



£210 a month



£630 over three months



£1,260 over six months



£2,555 over three months

If you've tried and failed to quit before, you might be worried about your chances of success this time around. Are you looking for a really powerful reason to stop?

If you have a family, and you smoke around them, take a look at some of the numbers relating to second-hand/passive smoking (when someone inhales another person's smoke). You may find cause to quit right there.

You could be increasing your family's risk of getting lung cancer by **25%** if they inhale your second-hand smoke.

12,000 people are thought to die every year in the UK from lung cancer, heart disease, stroke and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease all caused by second-hand smoke.

There are **165,000** new cases of disease among UK children each year with a link to second-hand smoke. If you smoke around your children you could be putting them at higher risk of respiratory infections, asthma, bacterial meningitis and cot death.

What is in a cigarette?

4,000+

the amount of chemicals in tobacco smoke.

These can damage the lining of your coronary arteries, causing fatty material to build up and block the arteries. They can also make your blood more likely to clot, blocking your arteries further, leading to a heart attack or stroke.

Carbon monoxide

A poisonous gas and fatal in high concentrations. It deprives the heart and body tissues of vital oxygen while increasing your risk of heart disease.

Tar

Can cause cancer (including lung cancer) plus other serious lung diseases. When you smoke, about 70 per cent of the tar from the cigarette stays in your lungs.

Nicotine

As addictive as heroin or cocaine, this chemical raises your heart rate and blood pressure; most smokers become dependent on the nicotine they get from tobacco.



What to expect when you stop



On your marks...

So you are ready to stop. It's important to be prepared for some of the physical and mental experiences you may have. These range from smoking cravings, caused by the withdrawal of nicotine from your system, coughing (as your body clears the tar from your lungs), hunger (as your metabolism changes) and irritability as your body adjusts to being nicotine-free. Your GP or stop smoking advisor can help you through these feelings, but remember that these are temporary.



Get set...

People have their own approaches to stopping smoking. You might stop straight away or gradually cut down. Below are some of the options available. Remember to get professional advice on what may be the best option for you.

Nicotine Replacement therapy (NRT)

Gum, sprays, lozenges or inhalators can double your chance of quitting and satisfy your need for the action of smoking. However, if they're not on prescription, they can be expensive.

Medication

Medications like bupropion (Zyban) or varenicline (Champix) can reduce your cravings and even double your chance of quitting, but, like with all medication, you may experience side effects.

Willpower

It's free and there are no pills involved. But research has shown that people are more likely to quit smoking with the help of NRT or medication.

Complementary therapies

Some people swear by alternative therapies like acupuncture or hypnotherapy for quitting smoking. These can be expensive.

What about using electronic cigarettes?

Scientists do not yet know if e-cigarettes can help you quit or whether they cause any long-term damage to your health, so it is advisable to steer clear of these.



Go

Stopping smoking is a challenge, and no one expects you to go it alone. There is a lot of help and support available to help you to quit for good. Make a plan and stick to it

- Talk to your doctor or pharmacist for advice on the best method to help you quit.
- Join a smoking cessation clinic at your GP surgery
- Find an NHS Stop Smoking Service for free face-to-face support to quit smoking
- Call 0800 434 6677 or go to www.smokefree.nhs.uk

Visit www.nosmokingday.org.uk for information and support. There's an online community where you can connect with other people who are quitting too