

# How to stop smoking before your operation

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## Information for patients

This leaflet can be made available in other formats including large print, CD and Braille and in languages other than English, upon request.

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Your doctor has advised you need surgery (an operation). It is very important you try to stop smoking at least 4 - 6 weeks before the date of your operation, if possible.

Smoking increases your risk of developing complications and may delay your discharge from hospital.

Smokers:

- need more anaesthesia during surgery to reduce spasms and coughing because the tar in cigarettes constantly irritates their lungs
- need more oxygen therapy in the recovery room after an operation because the carbon monoxide from tobacco smoke reduces the oxygen levels in their blood. It can also cause the blood to become more 'sticky' which can cause small blood clots around the wound.
- have a higher risk of developing chest infections after surgery as smoking smothers the cilia (little hairs) that help to clean mucus out of their lungs
- have slower wound healing. Less oxygen reaches their wound because nicotine is a stimulant and can cause the arteries to constrict, (become narrower) stopping vital oxygen reaching the wound.

Even if you can only manage to give up for a short time before your operation, this will help you to recover more quickly.

## How can I get information about stopping smoking?

There is an NHS Stop Smoking Service near to where you live, you can get details by ringing the contact numbers towards the end of this leaflet. You can also contact your GP or nearest pharmacy (chemist) for advice and support.

## What is available to help me stop smoking?

There are various options to help cope with the withdrawal from nicotine (the addictive substance that encourages you to continue smoking)

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These are:

- **'Cold Turkey'**. This means you stop smoking on your chosen day without any product or support.
- **Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT)**. There are different types of NRT available, for example, skin patches, chewing gum, lozenges, microtabs, inhalators, nasal or oral sprays and NRT oral strips.

The NRT helps you to give up smoking by mimicking (copying) the nicotine your body is used to. It then reduces the nicotine levels slowly, over a 12 week period. NRT can be bought from pharmacies or the supermarket. If this is your choice, **you must** read and follow the instructions carefully.

NRT can be prescribed by your nearest Stop Smoking Service after an assessment from a trained advisor or by your own GP. The prescription charge for a 12 week course can be much cheaper than smoking.

Unfortunately you will not be able to use oral NRT products on the day of your operation as you will be nil-by-mouth, but you may still be able to use patches. Ask your anaesthetist for more information.

- **Varenicline (Champix)**. This is a product that can be very successful in helping you to stop smoking. It works in a very different way to NRT as it slowly blocks the nicotine receptors in your brain, stopping the withdrawal and pleasure you gain from the nicotine. It is a prescription only medicine from either your local Stop Smoking Service or GP. It is also prescribed over a 12 week period.
- **Electronic cigarettes**. Public Health England “states that there is an overwhelming body of evidence that electronic cigarettes may not be “safe” but are almost certainly safer than tobacco”. However, North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust do not allow the use of electronic cigarettes in any of it's buildings at present.

All these products can help you to stop smoking but motivation, willpower and wanting to change your behaviours and routines are also very important.

## Deciding to stop

The first thing you have to do is make up your mind you are going to stop. Set a quit date when you will finally stop. It may be tomorrow or after a weekend, but whenever it is, do not leave it more than 1 week. Telling friends and family will help you stick to your decision and making sure it isn't when you will be attending social functions, that could jeopardise your quit attempt.

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It is often very useful at this point to complete a smoking diary of each cigarette you have and write down how you feel. Are you smoking because of stress, relaxation, social reasons or boredom? It is also useful to write down positive and negative thoughts about your smoking, for example, you will become fitter, healthier and will save money, as opposed to being unfit and having less money in your pocket. You may also have other more personal reasons to quit.

### Preparing to stop

#### Avoid temptation

Get rid of all your cigarettes, cigars or tobacco. Make it difficult to smoke a cigarette in a moment of crisis. Put or throw away your ashtrays, matches, lighters and anything else that will remind you about smoking.

#### Change your habits, for example,

- if you always miss breakfast and smoke a cigarette with a cup of tea or coffee then it is better to have a different drink such as fresh orange juice or fruit tea. Try to start the day with some breakfast such as cereal or toast, to get your metabolism (digestive system) going.
- try cleaning your teeth as soon as you get up.
- if you always smoke after a meal, do the washing up straight away. This will take your mind off cigarettes. Also choose a different seat to your normal one, so that your brain does not automatically associate your position with your normal smoking habits.
- go for a walk.
- try to avoid social occasions where friends and family might smoke, encouraging you to join them. It is very difficult to say no, particularly if drinking alcohol at the same time.
- join a gym or exercise class which not only helps you to get fit but also stops you from becoming bored.
- take up a new hobby which you might not have had the money to do before you stopped.

save up for that car or holiday you have always dreamed of. Working out exactly how much you have spent on cigarettes over a year might encourage you to stop.

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## The day you stop

### Plan your day

Try and do things you know will not tempt you to have a cigarette.

**Remember** from today you are no longer a smoker trying to give up.

### Tell yourself you are a non-smoker

Work through the day without a cigarette and take each day at a time. Plan a treat for the end of the day to reward yourself for not smoking. Have something special to eat, or go to the cinema; somewhere you will be less likely to smoke.

## Staying stopped

### It is worth the effort

Once the first day is over you have to make sure you stay stopped for good. For some people this is a difficult time, but it will improve your recovery after your operation. If people offer you a cigarette or tobacco tell them why you have stopped smoking and why it is so important.

### Ways to relax

If you smoked to help you relax you will need to find other ways to relax. Enjoying a new hobby, making time for a long soak in the bath, spending time with non-smoking friends are just some examples to consider.

### Food tastes much better

As a non-smoker your food will taste so much better and you will really start to enjoy your meals. Quite often putting on weight is a major reason for not trying to stop smoking. This can be avoided if you eat extra fruit and vegetables in your diet and do not replace your cigarettes with sweet and savoury snacks such as chocolate and crisps.

### Never have the odd cigarette

The easiest way to stay stopped is to never smoke again. The odd one here and there will lead to another and another. If you do start smoking again treat it as a stumble, and start to stop again as soon as possible.

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**I have recovered from my operation and stopped smoking.**

**Congratulate yourself on what you have achieved so far. Remember, it really is worth staying stopped. Remind yourself of the benefits to yourself and your family by not smoking.**

## **Contact numbers**

### **Specialist Stop Smoking Service (incorporating Middlesbrough, Redcar and Cleveland, Stockton and Hartlepool)**

telephone: 01642 383819

Monday - Friday, 9.00am - 5.00pm

or via the website at [www.nth.nhs.uk/stopsmoking](http://www.nth.nhs.uk/stopsmoking)

### **County Durham Stop Smoking Service**

Smokefreelifecountydurham

telephone: 0191 369 2016 or 0800 772 0565

or via the website at [www.smokefreelifecountydurham.co.uk](http://www.smokefreelifecountydurham.co.uk)

### **NHS Smokefree**

telephone helpline: 0300 123 1044

Monday – Friday, 9.00am – 8.00pm

Saturday – Sunday, 11.00am – 4.00pm

or via the website at [www.smokefree.nhs.uk](http://www.smokefree.nhs.uk)

## How to stop smoking before your operation

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This leaflet has been produced in partnership with patients and carers. All patient leaflets are regularly reviewed, and any suggestions you have as to how it may be improved are extremely valuable. Please write to the Quality Assurance Team, University Hospital of North Tees or email: [patientinformation@nth.nhs.uk](mailto:patientinformation@nth.nhs.uk)

### **Comments, Concerns, Compliments or Complaints**

We are continually trying to improve the services we provide.

We want to know what we're doing well or if there's anything which we can improve, that's why the Patient Experience Team is here to help.

Our Patient Experience Team is here to try to resolve your concerns as quickly as possible. If you would like to contact or request a copy of our PET leaflet, please contact:

telephone: 01642 624719

Monday – Friday, 9.00 am – 4.00 pm

Messages can be left on the answering machine and will be picked up throughout the day.

freephone: 0800 092 0084

Mobile: (can use text): 0779 506 1883

Email: [patientexperience@nth.nhs.uk](mailto:patientexperience@nth.nhs.uk)

Out of hours if you wish to speak to a senior member of Trust staff, please contact the hospital switchboard who will bleep the appropriate person.

telephone: 01642 617617

24 hours a day, 7 days a week

The Patient Experience Team is available to discuss your concerns in person Monday – Friday, 1.30 pm – 4.30 pm. The office is based at the University Hospital of North Tees. It is near the lifts in the main tower block.

### **Data Protection and use of patient information**

The Trust has developed a Data Protection Policy in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1988 and the Freedom of Information Act 2000. All of our staff respect this policy and confidentiality is adhered to at all times. If you require further information please contact the Information Governance Team.

telephone: 01642 833551 or email: [information.governance@nth.nhs.uk](mailto:information.governance@nth.nhs.uk)

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