

Smoking Cessation

Spotlight on Smoking

Smoking is the largest single cause of preventable death in the United Kingdom, claiming an estimated **120,000** victims each year. That is more than 13 people every hour, or the equivalent of a fully laden jumbo jet crashing every other day.

A person does not need to smoke very many cigarettes before the sense of taste and smell and appetite for food are affected by the many substances in tobacco smoke. A smoker's cough can develop quite rapidly and chest infections are more likely to occur.

Smoking can also affect the way the lungs cope with physical exertion, running for a bus, for example.

The worst effects appear after many years, the three main diseases being:

- Lung cancer - at least 90% of lung cancers are caused by smoking
- Chronic bronchitis and other lung diseases - about 90% of people who suffer from these diseases are smokers
- Heart disease - coronary heart disease is the leading cause of premature death in this country and smoking accounts for a large proportion of these deaths. The risk of having a heart attack under 50 is ten times greater for smokers than non smokers

I have smoked for years - is it too late now for me to stop ?

Severe though the risks from continuing to smoke are, a person's health usually starts to improve from the moment they give up the habit. Once a person stops smoking, their health starts improving immediately.

Within:

- **One hour:** blood pressure falls and circulation starts improving
- **One day:** lungs begin the process of cleaning out mucus and other debris
- **One week:** bronchial passages relax making breathing easier
- **One month:** circulation improves throughout the whole body
- **One year:** lung function improves 10%
- **Ten years:** risk of lung cancer falls to about half that of a smoker. Risk of heart attack falls to about the same as someone who has never smoked.

Where can I get help?

Although many people find the most effective way to stop smoking is to pick a day and just stop - others find it more difficult and need support and help.

Compared with willpower alone, nicotine replacement therapy doubles success rate - it does NOT replace the need for willpower and is not a magic cure.

Other sources of advice and help are your local Doctor who may run a local clinic. Health education and health promotion units also provide free leaflets, give advice and some run stop smoking groups.

Telephone support providing help in stopping smoking and information on local services: **National Quitline: 0800 00 22 00**

Or contact:

ASH (Action on Smoking and Health)

England: 020 7739 5902
Scotland: 0131 225 4725
Wales: 029 2064 1101
N. Ireland: 028 9066 3281

Website: www.ash.org.uk

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