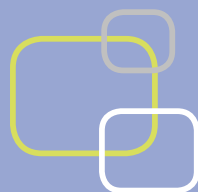


smoking
some basic information



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What are the problems associated with smoking?

CONSEQUENCES FOR THE INDIVIDUAL:

- Tobacco smoking is the greatest preventable cause of illness and premature death in the UK.
- Half of all smokers die prematurely of a smoking-related disease. This represents about 120,000 deaths each year.
- The decrease in life expectancy for regular smokers, under the age of 35 years who do not subsequently quit, has been estimated to be about 8 years.
- The younger people start smoking, the more likely they are to smoke for longer and to die early from smoking. Someone who starts smoking aged 15 is three times more likely to die of cancer due to smoking than someone who starts in their mid-20s.
- Smoking is a major cause of lung cancer, heart disease, circulatory disease and lung disease such as emphysema. It causes other respiratory disease; reduced sperm count and impotence in men; premature menopause and infertility in women; tooth disease; and adds to the risk associated with taking the oral contraceptive pill.
- Smoking causes 84% of deaths from lung cancer, and 83% of deaths from chronic obstructive lung disease, including bronchitis.
- Smoking causes approximately 3 out of 10 cancer deaths. As well as lung cancer, smoking can cause death by cancer of the mouth, larynx, oesophagus, bladder, kidney, stomach and pancreas.
- Smoking causes one out of every seven deaths from heart disease.

SMOKING IN PREGNANCY INCREASES THE RISK OF:

- Miscarriage
- Preterm delivery
- Reduced birthweight
- Perinatal death

PARENTAL SMOKING IS ASSOCIATED WITH AN INCREASED RATE OF:

- Sudden infant death syndrome
- Asthma and respiratory disease
- Middle ear disease
- Hospital admission - 17,000 children under 5 years old in England and Wales are admitted because of parental smoking each year

ENVIRONMENTAL TOBACCO SMOKE (PASSIVE SMOKING):

- Is a cause of lung cancer in non-smokers and, in those with long-term exposure, the increased risk is in the order of 20-30%
- Contributes to deaths from heart disease
- May worsen asthma. People with asthma are more prone to attacks in smoky atmospheres.
- May cause eye, nose and throat irritation

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF STOPPING SMOKING?

- Stopping smoking has major health benefits.
- Smokers who quit before the age of about 35 years have a life expectancy only slightly less than those who have never smoked.
- Smokers who stop before the age of 50 years decrease the risk of dying from smoking-related diseases by 50%.
- Stopping smoking for 1 year reduces the excess risk of dying from a myocardial infarction or stroke by 50%.
- The risk of developing lung cancer is reduced by 20-90% - depending on the number of years of abstinence.
- The risk of developing oral cancer is reduced by 50% after stopping smoking for 3-5 years and, after stopping smoking for 10 years, is the same as that of a person who has never smoked.
- Stopping smoking normalizes the decline in lung function found in people with chronic obstructive airways disease.
- Stopping smoking before or during pregnancy reduces the risk of preterm birth and low birthweight.

HOW MANY PEOPLE SUCCESSFULLY STOP SMOKING?

- In 1998, 69% of smokers in England wanted to give up smoking.
- It is estimated that about 4 million smokers a year attempt to quit but that only 3-6% of these (1-2% of all smokers) succeed.
- About half of those setting a quit date through the smoking cessation services successfully quit by the 4-week follow-up. The majority receive nicotine replacement therapy or Bupropion.
- Smokers have much more ill health than non-smokers. For many smokers, years of ill health are followed by an early death. Half of all smokers will be killed by their habit.
- 7 in 10 smokers want to quit. Motivation is the key factor in being able to quit.
- Support and advice on quitting will help. If supportive friends, family or nurse are not available, why not try QUITLINE: 0800 169 0 169 or www.givingupsmoking.co.uk/
- Tips on quitting include: set a date to stop and stick to it. Get rid of cigarettes, ashtrays, lighters, etc.
- Anticipate problems such as social gatherings, cravings and an increase in appetite. Give up with someone else for mutual support.
- Nicotine substitutes such as gum, sprays, inhalators, sublingual tablets, lozenges or patches may help if withdrawal symptoms are troublesome. Using a nicotine substitute roughly doubles the chance of successfully quitting smoking in people who are motivated to stop.
- Bupropion is a drug that may also help smokers who want to quit.

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