

Maternity Services

Frimley Park & Wexham Park Hospital

Stop Smoking in Pregnancy Service



Information for patients,
relatives and carers

Stopping smoking is one of the most important things you can do to improve the health of you and your unborn baby

This information is for you if you smoke and are either already pregnant or thinking about having a baby. It is also for you if you are exposed to tobacco smoke at home. You may also find it helpful if you are the partner or a relative of a woman who smokes.

Many women find it difficult to stop smoking but it is one of the most important things you can do to improve your baby's health, growth and development. It is also the single most important thing that you can do to improve your own long-term health.

Why stop smoking for your baby?

When you smoke or are exposed to cigarettes over 4000 toxins including, carbon monoxide and nicotine cross the placenta directly into your baby's blood stream - so your baby smokes with you. This reduces their oxygen and nourishment. By stopping smoking, these harmful gasses leave your body and you will:

- Reduce the risk of complications in pregnancy and birth
- Reduce the risk to your baby of being born prematurely (before 37 weeks)
- Reduce the risk of your baby being born underweight
- Reduce the risk of miscarriage and stillbirth (your baby dying in the womb)
- Reduce the risk of placental abruption (afterbirth coming away from the uterus causing bleeding)
- Reduce the risk of Sudden Infant death Syndrome (SIDS) previously known as cot death
- Reduce the chance of your baby developing breathing difficulties such as asthma and pneumonia, behavioural and mental health difficulties in childhood such as ADHD



Why stop smoking for you?

- After 20 minutes your pulse will already be starting to return to a normal rate
- After eight hours your oxygen levels will be returning to normal and carbon monoxide levels in your blood will have reduced by half
- 48 hours after stopping smoking your body will have flushed out all carbon monoxide and your lungs will start to clear out mucus
- After 72 hours your breathing will feel easier
- After 2-12 weeks your circulation will have improved
- 3-9 months later any coughs, wheezing or breathing problems will be improving as your lung function is starting to increase by up to 10%
- A year later your risk of a heart attack will have halved compared to a smoker
- After 10 years your risk of death from lung cancer will have halved compared to a smoker
- More great news..... after 15 years of quitting, your risk of a heart attack is now the same as someone who has never smoked
- Wounds will heal quicker, with fewer infections.

More great benefits.....

- Your sense of smell and taste will improve
- Improves oxygen levels to your skin improving its appearance and prevents further deterioration
- Your teeth will look whiter with fresher breath. You are less likely to get gum disease and premature loss of teeth
- Improves fertility levels and improved chances of having a healthy pregnancy
- Men who quit by the age of 30 add 10 years to their life
- Many people believe that having a cigarette helps them with stress. In fact, scientific studies show that stress levels are lower when people stop smoking.



Myths around smoking



There are lots of myths and old wives tales around smoking in pregnancy. The following information will try to answer some of them.

Myth	Fact
The womb provides a protective bubble around the baby	The womb protects your baby from many things but the toxins from cigarettes go into your blood stream and straight to your baby.
A smaller baby will be easier to deliver	A smaller baby does not mean you will have an easier birth. In fact you may have a more difficult one! Smaller babies are weaker and might struggle during labour leading to a higher chance of you having a caesarean section. It also adds to the chance of preterm birth and risk of stillbirth.
My mum smoked when she was pregnant and I am fine	Smoking affects babies in different ways. Stopping smoking gives your baby the best chance of being healthy. Why take the risk?

It won't affect me or my baby if my partner smokes	Second hand smoke is also very dangerous for your baby. You could try quitting together and give your baby the best start.
I didn't know I was pregnant - it's too late now	Stopping smoking at any stage is still beneficial to your baby and you. It's never too late to stop.
It's too stressful to quit smoking while I'm pregnant	Research shows that smoking increases anxiety and stress. Nicotine creates an immediate sense of relaxation, so people smoke believing it reduces stress and anxiety. The reality is that this feeling is very short lasting and soon gives way to withdrawal.

Will I be asked about smoking when I am pregnant?

Yes. From your first antenatal appointment, your midwife will ask whether you or any other member of the household smokes. This is important so that you and your family can be given support and help to stop smoking as early as possible. You will be asked how often you smoke and how much tobacco you smoke per day. You will be given information about how smoking and passive smoking harms you and your baby. In an effort to support you and reduce smoking in pregnancy, to give you and your baby the added benefits of a smoke free pregnancy – all women who smoke, e-cig and vape are referred to our maternity stop smoking service. The Stop Smoking Advisor will contact you and offer further support and advice.

What is the carbon monoxide (CO) test?

Carbon monoxide (CO) levels are higher in women who smoke and in passive smokers than in women who don't. CO is a poisonous gas that restricts the amount of oxygen getting to your baby. At your first antenatal appointment your midwife will ask you to do a breath test, which will measure your level of exposure to CO. This will help your midwife measure your exposure to tobacco smoke. This will also be repeated when you are 36 weeks pregnant and some other times it may be required in pregnancy.

All pregnant women are advised to have the test whether they smoke or not as levels may also be high if you have faulty gas appliances at home. CO poisoning can be fatal. If you don't smoke and you are not exposed to tobacco smoke but your levels are high, you should contact the free Health and Safety Executive Gas Safety Advice Line on 0800 300 363. CO levels may also be raised if you are exposed to high levels of pollution or if you have a medical condition called lactose intolerance.



Maternity Stop Smoking Service

We have a specialist maternity tobacco dependency service, and many people take this help as pregnancy is a great time to quit. Our services are here to support your attempt to quit and remain smokefree during your pregnancy. It includes the following

- One to one support
- Information about useful products
- Help and support with setting a quit date
- Discussions on how to deal with triggers and difficult situations around quitting
- Offering a support network for you and your family

A craving lasts 4 minutes, the rest is the thought process, so distraction is key!

Committed to excellence

Working together

Facing the future



Compassionate
Effective
Modern

Your first pre-quit meeting

The tobacco dependency advisor (TDA) will offer you behavior therapy support and nicotine replacement therapy (NRT). You can discuss your tobacco dependency and your expectations for stopping smoking.

The TDA will advise you to follow the 'No Puff rule': once you make your quit attempt, you do not have a drag of another cigarette going forward.

You can choose the type of NRT you use during your pregnancy from the products we supply. You can read more about NRT below.

You will set your quit date which is the date you will no longer continue smoke.

Further appointments

Your follow-up appointments in weeks three to 12 will be a mixture of face-to-face and over the phone appointments. The TDA will discuss with you any challenging situations you may be facing, celebrate any successes and continue to monitor your CO levels.

Nicotine replacement therapy (NRT)

You can use nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) during pregnancy if it will help you stop smoking and you're unable to stop without it. NRT contains only nicotine and none of the damaging chemicals found in cigarettes, so it is a much better option than continuing to smoke. It helps you by giving you the nicotine you would have had from a cigarette. You can be prescribed NRT during pregnancy by a GP or an NHS stop smoking adviser. You can also buy it over the counter without a prescription from a pharmacy.

NRT is available as

- Skin patches
- Chewing gum
- Inhalators
- Lozenges
- Nasal and mouth spray

It's not recommended that you take stop smoking tablets such as Champix or Zyban during pregnancy.

Before using any of these products, speak to a midwife, GP, a pharmacist or a specialist stop smoking adviser. Our maternity tobacco dependency service can provide this to you for free. By getting this specialist advice you can be sure that you're doing the best for your baby and for you. Remember, you are twice as likely to be successful at quitting if you get some support from a trained adviser.



E-cigarettes and vaping in pregnancy

E-cigarettes and vaping are new, and we do not know the long-term effects they will have on the body. However, current evidence suggests they have less risks than smoking.

E-cigarettes and vapes do not produce tar or CO, which are some of the main chemicals we worry about when smoking cigarettes as they are harmful for developing babies. The vapor from an e-cigarette or vape does contain some potentially harmful chemicals, but at much lower levels than cigarette smoke.

Although not risk-free, if using e-cigarettes or vapes helps you to stop smoking, it is much safer for you and your baby than continuing to smoke. If you want to use e-cigarettes or vapes as a tool to quit smoking, you can still get specialist support from your TDA. Unlike NRT such as patches or gums, e-cigarettes and vape are not available on an NHS prescription.

National Smokefree helpline

The National Smokefree helpline offers free help, support and advice on stopping smoking and can give you details of local support services.

You can also sign up to receive ongoing advice and support at a time that suits you.

Information:

National Smokefree helpline: 0300 123 1044

9am to 8pm Monday to Friday, and 11am to 4pm Saturday and Sunday.

Our team at Frimley and Wexham Park

Wexham:

Ambreen Khalil 07867 441316





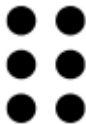
Carly Ennis 07745540011

Frimley:

Eve Murphy 07468 701475



For a translation of this leaflet or to access this information in another format including:

				
Large print	Easy read	Translated	Audio	Braille

Please contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on:

Frimley Park Hospital

Telephone: 0300 613 6530

Email: fhft.palsfrimleypark@nhs.net

Wexham Park and Heatherwood Hospitals

Telephone: 0300 615 3365

Email: fhft.palswexhampark@nhs.net

Frimley Park Hospital Portsmouth Road Frimley Surrey GU16 7UJ	Heatherwood Hospital Brook Avenue Ascot Berkshire SL5 7GB	Wexham Park Hospital Wexham Street Slough Berkshire SL2 4HL
Switchboard: 0300 614 5000		Website: www.fhft.nhs.uk

Title of leaflet	Stop Smoking in Pregnancy Service		
Author	Kirsty Stone		
Department	Maternity		
Ref no.	1.0		
Issue date	24/06/25	Review date	06/28

Legal notice

Please remember that this leaflet is intended as general information only. We aim to make the information as up to date and accurate as possible. Please therefore always check specific advice or any concerns you may have with your doctor.