

## Patient information

# Smoking: How does it affect me?

## Smoking

For many people smoking has been a way of life for many years. For some it is a social habit, and something they enjoy, whilst others smoke to help reduce stress and anxiety.

This leaflet is not here to judge what you choose to do, but gives you a rounded view of the facts of the effects that smoking can have on both your lung and general health.

It must be remembered that smoking is an addiction and for some people it is easy to give up, but for others it may take time and several attempts, with or without support.

One thing that must be remembered though is that it doesn't matter how long you have smoked for, or how much tobacco you have smoked, giving up smoking will not reverse the damage already done, but will:

- Slow the rate at which the lungs deteriorate
- Reduce breathlessness
- Reduce coughing
- Reduce sinus congestion
- Reduce the frequency of chest infections



## Smoking statistics

- 93% of mouth and throat cancers are caused by smoking
- 84% of lung cancer deaths are caused by smoking
- 83% of COPD deaths are due to smoking

For every 15 cigarettes you smoke a mutation occurs in your body. Mutations (changes in your cell DNA) are how cancers start.

It is estimated that smoking related health issues are costing the NHS approximately £6 billion per year in hospital admissions, GP consultations and prescriptions, as well as any operations or other treatments needed for smoking-related diseases.



## Cigars, pipes and roll-ups



A single cigar contains approx. 1 ounce of tobacco. That is as much as an entire packet of cigarettes.



Roll-ups contain higher levels (approx. 17.5%) of additives used to stop the tobacco drying out. Roll-ups are often smoked without a filter meaning more dangerous chemicals enter our lungs.



Some studies suggest that pipe smoking may be less harmful than cigarette smoking, as pipe smokers do not inhale the smoke into their lungs. However, pipe smokers have a much higher probability of developing mouth and throat cancers.



Smoking marijuana is as damaging to your lungs as smoking cigarettes. The smoke irritates your lungs and can cause lung diseases. It can also lead to mental health issues.

# What is in a Cigarette??

- ✓ Each cigarette contains more than **5000** different **chemicals**
- ✓ More than **70** of these chemicals are poisonous and **known to cause cancer**



## How does smoking affect my lungs?

Our lungs are supposed to be a very sterile environment and so any foreign particles that are inhaled on a regular basis (whether it be cigarette smoke, second-hand smoke, wood/metal dust, fumes or air pollutants) can potentially cause damage to our lungs and how they work:

- Our lungs have a filter system of hairs(cilia) that trap unwanted particles and stop them entering our lungs. Long-term exposure to smoke/dust particles can cause these to clog and stop working (they may even be destroyed completely).
- Our airways become irritated and inflamed, making them narrow. This makes it harder for the air to get into and out of our lungs.
- When our lungs are irritated they produce an inflammatory liquid. This liquid destroys the alveoli (air sacs) which reduces the oxygens ability to enter our body.
- Our lungs can become stiffer. This makes it more difficult for them to expand and take the oxygen in and then recoil to squeeze out the waste gas (carbon dioxide).

All of these things can lead to:

- Breathlessness
- Wheezing
- Increased risk of chest infections and pneumonia
- Persistent cough
- Increased production of phlegm

### **How does smoking affect the rest of my body?**

Smoking can also have a significantly negative effect on other parts of our bodies:

- It makes our blood thicker and stickier leading to an increased risk of heart attack and stroke
- It causes a build-up of plaque in our blood vessels, caused by smoking, which can narrow the blood vessels and cause high blood pressure



- It increases our risk of developing diabetes by raising blood sugar levels and increasing our resistance to insulin
- It can cause poor memory and increases our risk of dementia due to lack of oxygen to our brain and increased exposure to carbon monoxide
- It reduces bone density, therefore increasing the risk of developing osteoporosis
- It weakens the oesophagus muscle which can lead to problems with acid reflux

## Passive smoking or second-hand smoke

Whenever you light a cigarette, or pipe, 'second-hand' smoke is produced.

Second-hand smoke is the smoke breathed out by you (the smoker) and the smoke given off at the end of the cigarette or pipe.



Second-hand smoke gives off over 4000 chemicals, 50 of which are known to cause cancers.

More than 80% of second-hand smoke is invisible and odourless.

When you have a cigarette your body emits toxins for up to 4 hours after you have finished the cigarette.

Second-hand, or passive smokers, are at risk of the same diseases as smokers - they just don't have a choice!!

Exposure to second-hand smoke increases your family and friends risks of contracting cancer, bronchitis, pneumonia, chest infections, asthma, ear infections, bronchiolitis and bacterial meningitis - to name but a few!

## Re-thinking your smoking situation

It must be the right time for you as an individual to want to do this for yourself, otherwise the success rate is lower.

If you are unable to quit smoking, or are not ready (or in the right place mentally), then you could start by:

- making your home and car completely smoke-free. This means no smoking in your home or car (ever), not even when you are alone!
- encourage people that visit your home not to smoke there either!

These small changes will help to reduce the number of cigarettes that you smoke and will help to improve your health and the health of your family and friends.



## DON'T FORGET!!!

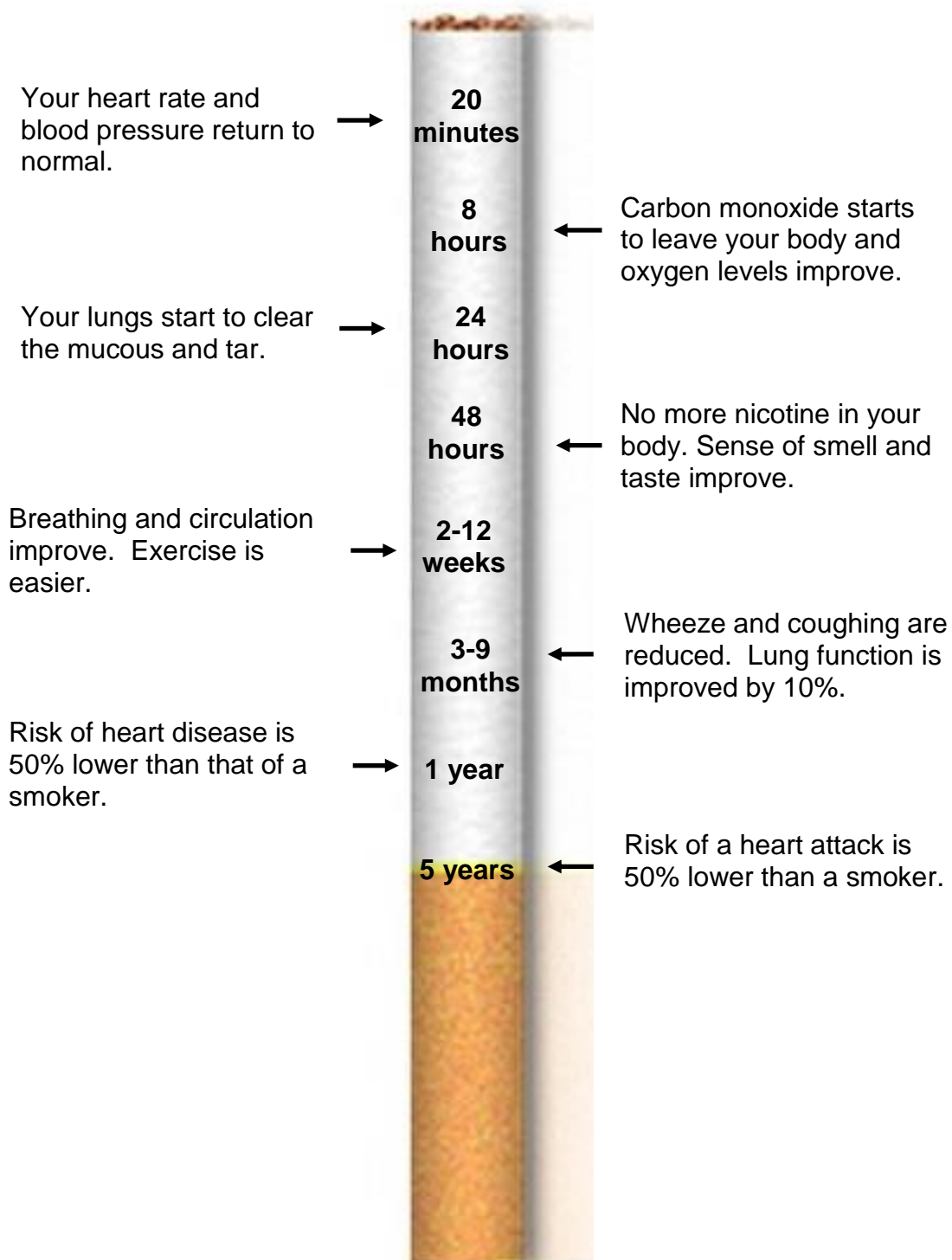
Smoking is addictive.....sometimes you will relapse when trying to give up

## DO NOT BE DESPONDANT!!

....keep trying and always ask for help if your willpower is not strong!

**Don't forget the NHS Stop-Smoking Service is FREE!**

## What happens to your body when you stop smoking?





**..... after 10 years your risk of dying of lung cancer is 50% less than that of a current smoker**

## **Smoking cessation options available**

Below are five of the most common methods you can use to try and give up smoking:

- 1) **Cold turkey**
- 2) **Meditation, hypnosis or acupuncture**
- 3) **Nicotine replacement therapy** - comes in the form of nicotine gum or patches, micro-tabs, lozenges, nasal sprays and inhalators. These should be used for at least 8-12 weeks for good results.
- 4) **Medication** - the most commonly used tablets are Champix or Zyban. These are prescription only medications and help to reduce your cravings for a cigarette.
- 5) **E-cigarettes and vaping** - these come in the form of Cigalikes and Vape Pens (for lighter smokers), or Vape Pens or Mods (for heavier smokers). Although there is currently very little research on the long-term effects of these alternatives, they are thought to carry a smaller health risk in comparison to cigarette smoking. They do not produce tar or carbon monoxide (two of the most damaging elements in cigarette smoke) and the chemicals in the vapours are at much lower levels.

**Please speak to your GP, Practice Nurse, Respiratory Nurse or Stop Smoking Clinic for further information.**

## **Useful stop-smoking contacts**

- Your GP, Practice Nurse or Respiratory Nurse can help set you up on a stop smoking programme
- Local Stop Smoking Services:  
One Life Suffolk: 01473 718193  
[info@onelifesuffolk.co.uk](mailto:info@onelifesuffolk.co.uk)  
[www.onelifesuffolk.co.uk](http://www.onelifesuffolk.co.uk)
- Smoke-free National Helpline: 0300 123 1044

## Other useful contacts

### Physiotherapy Department

West Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust

Hardwick Lane, Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk, IP33 2QZ

Tel: 01284 713300

### Suffolk Community Healthcare Care Co-ordination Centre (CCC)

Tel: 0300 123 2425

*If you would like any information regarding access to the West Suffolk Hospital and its facilities please visit the website for AccessAble (the new name for DisabledGo)*

<https://www.accessable.co.uk/organisations/west-suffolk-nhs-foundation-trust>



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