

## Smoking: the facts

- In the **military** smokers tend to be less physically fit and are more likely to suffer from injuries and illness.
- Smoking is the greatest single cause of illness and premature death in the UK.
- Every year over **100,000 smokers** in the UK die from smoking related causes.
- The life expectancy of a long-term smoker is about **10 years** less than a non-smoker.
- Smoking is a leading cause of cardiovascular diseases; smokers are **twice** as likely to have a heart attack compared with people who have never smoked.
- Smoking increases your blood pressure.
- Smoking during pregnancy increases the risk of: miscarriage, complications of pregnancy, low birth weight, congenital defects, and poor growth and development.
- Smokers put others around them (e.g. babies and children) at risk of ill health due the effects of breathing in second-hand smoke (passive smoking).
- Smoking can also affect: your sense of taste and smell, your fertility, the appearance of your skin, your breathing, and your teeth.
- **Nutrition:** smoking increases vitamin C losses from the body, and decreases the absorption of vitamin D and calcium. Vitamin C is needed by the body to prevent diseases. Vitamin D and calcium deficiencies can lead to bone loss and osteoporosis.

## The good news

**Stopping smoking has huge benefits to your health and it is never too late to stop.**

## Benefits of stopping smoking

- **Better finances:** If you regularly smoke 20-a-day, you will save about £2,000 per year if you stop smoking, leaving you with more money to spend on other things you enjoy.
- **More energy:** you will have more energy as your circulation improves, which will make physical activity much easier.
- **Improved military fitness**, with fewer injuries and quicker healing.
- **Longer life:** quitting smoking reduces your risk of coronary heart disease, stroke and certain cancers, and will add years to your life.
- **Younger looking skin:** the appearance of your skin will improve.
- **Better breathing:** coughing, wheezing and breathing problems will improve. Chest infections and colds will become less frequent.
- **Better smelling:** the smell of stale tobacco will go from your breath, clothes and hair.
- **Improved fertility.**
- **Healthier loved ones:** stopping smoking will protect the health of your non-smoking friends and family.

## **Get the right support**

Remember that you are not alone. You can get support from a variety of sources:

- **Online:** The “**WeQuit**” website is full of information on how to quit and has an online forum of over 40,000 fellow quitters. The NHS also has a **Smokefree** website.
- **Phone:** The NHS **Smokefree** Helpline - 0800 022 4332.
- **In person:** Your MO, Nurse or a pharmacist can provide advice and tips on quitting. **NHS Stop Smoking Clinics** can also support you to stop smoking.

## **Practical tips to help you stop smoking**

- Make a date to give up and stick to it.
- Throw away all of your tobacco, lighters and ashtrays.
- Make a plan and download or order a stop smoking booklet or visit one of the quit smoking websites to get information about the different methods of quitting.
- Get support and let your family, friends and colleagues know that you are quitting.
- Download and use the ‘NHS Quit Smoking iPhone app’ or the ‘NHS desktop widget’.
- Various medicines can increase your chance of quitting (e.g. Nicotine Replacement Therapy [NRT] including: patches, gums, lozenges, tablets, inhalators and sprays).
- Keep busy to help take your mind off smoking. Try to change your routine, and avoid the shops where you normally buy cigarettes.
- Treat yourself. Use some of the money you save from stopping smoking to buy yourself something special.
- If you relapse do not give up. Remind yourself why you want to stop smoking and then take control.

## **How to stop smoking without putting on weight**

- Do more exercise.
- Use stop smoking treatments such as NRT.
- Avoid dieting until you have successfully stopped smoking.
- For more information please refer to the ‘Healthy eating’, ‘Weight management’ and ‘Physical activity’ DNAS factsheets (DNAS PH2, PH11 and PH12), and you could contact the DNAS.

## **For more information**

- British Heart Foundation: <http://www.bhf.org.uk/heart-health/prevention/smoking.aspx>
- NHS Smokefree: <http://www.smokefree.nhs.uk>
- WeQuit: <http://www.wequit.co.uk>
- Quit: <http://www.quit.org.uk>
- Defence Nutrition Advisory Service (DNAS): [NAVYINM-EMSDNAS@mod.uk](mailto:NAVYINM-EMSDNAS@mod.uk)