Give your baby a breather - Quit smoking

Help and advice on quitting smoking during pregnancy

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www.quit.ie
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Why should I quit?

If quitting smoking is the single most important thing you can do to protect your own health, imagine how important it is for your baby. So if you are pregnant, or thinking about getting pregnant, you’ve never had a better reason to quit smoking. Remember, you’ll be quitting for two.

- When you smoke, you breathe in nicotine, tar and carbon monoxide.

- You also breathe in around 7,000 other chemicals, many of them poisonous, such as arsenic, ammonia and benzene. All these poisons get into your baby’s bloodstream from yours.

- When you smoke, the tar and other chemicals that build up in your lungs can cause cancer.

- Smoking cuts down the amount of oxygen and nutrients that get to your baby. Your baby needs these to grow and develop. Babies born to women who smoke have a greater risk of infections and other health problems.
What are the risks if I smoke during pregnancy?

• If you smoke while pregnant, you are much more likely to miscarry.

• You are more likely to experience bleeding, sickness and other complications during pregnancy.

• Your baby is more likely to be born prematurely, ill or underweight, and to have a greater risk of cot death.

• About one in 10 stillbirths are caused by smoking.

All these risks have been proven by medical research.
What if I’m already pregnant?

Quitting smoking at any stage in your pregnancy is good for you and your baby. It’s never too late to start protecting your own and your baby’s health.

As soon as you quit smoking, the chemicals you’ve taken in through cigarettes will start to clear from your body, and your baby will be able to get more oxygen.
How does smoking affect my baby?

When you smoke a cigarette, all the poisons you breathe in get into your bloodstream, and from there into your baby’s blood.

This puts your baby at risk of:

Low birth weight

Smoking reduces the amount of oxygen and nutrients that get to your baby. Your baby needs these to grow and develop. Babies born to women who smoke have a greater risk of infections and other health problems.

Cot death

If you smoke during pregnancy or after your baby is born, your baby is up to three times more likely to die from cot death. Some studies say that one in four of all cot deaths is caused by smoking.
Asthma, wheezing and chest infections

Smoking while pregnant will damage the development of your baby’s lungs. Babies born to women who smoke are twice as likely to develop asthma. They are also more likely to have other problems, such as wheezing and chest infections.

After your baby is born

You need to protect your baby from passive smoking. Make your home a smoke-free zone. Even second-hand cigarette smoke can trigger asthma attacks and chest infections. Ask your family and friends not to smoke around you or your baby.

Ear infections

Babies who breathe in cigarette smoke are more likely to get middle ear infections and ‘glue ear’, which can cause partial deafness.
Colic

Babies whose mothers smoke are twice as likely to suffer from colic. Babies with colic cry a lot and are difficult to settle.

Meningitis

If you smoke, your baby is much more likely to get meningitis. Meningitis is an infection of the brain which can cause serious illness or death. Cigarette smoke damages the lining of the baby’s nose and throat, allowing more bacteria to stick there. This increases the chances of infection.
Quit smoking and save money

Imagine all the things you could do with the money you spend on cigarettes.

With a baby on the way, there are lots of things you’re going to need. Just a few weeks of not smoking could save you enough to buy a new cot, pram or lots of cute baby clothes. Quit for a few months, and you could save enough for a family holiday with your new baby.

Visit www.quit.ie/cost to find out just how much you could save.
I’d find it too hard to quit

Smoking is highly addictive. Not surprisingly, many people find it difficult to quit. Yet, every year thousands manage to quit for good. And you can too.

You may have already tried to quit. If you have, that’s a great sign. Research shows that the more times you try to quit smoking, the more likely you are to succeed. Being pregnant is the best reason for quitting smoking – one decision benefits two lives.

Help is at hand

You are twice as likely to quit for good if you get the right support from a trained quit smoking advisor or other health professional such as your family doctor (GP), midwife, public health nurse or pharmacist.

QUIT.ie has lots of information, advice and a really useful QUIT plan with daily emails and texts to help you on your quit journey. If you want to quit now or have a chat about quitting, call 1800 201 203 or freetext QUIT to 50100.
Getting ready to quit

Try writing down your reasons to keep on smoking and the reasons why you want to quit. And keep your list close by, as a reminder.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What I enjoy about smoking</th>
<th>Why I want to stop smoking</th>
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<tr>
<td>Example - It helps me relax.</td>
<td>Example - I worry about the damage to my health and my baby’s health.</td>
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Another useful tip is to think about where, when and why you smoke, and keep a diary of your smoking habits for a few days. This helps you to think about your smoking pattern and make plans to break it.

Some women told us why they are worried about quitting:

“Smoking helps me cope with stress.”

Smoking causes stress. This is because nicotine is a stimulant. When your nicotine level falls, you feel tense because your body is craving more nicotine. Smoking only makes you feel less stressed because it boosts your nicotine level again and relieves the craving temporarily.

“I’m worried about withdrawal symptoms.”

Nicotine is a powerful drug and it takes time to clear it from your body. Distract yourself when you get a craving for a cigarette and the feeling will pass in a few minutes. Other symptoms, such as coughing or being more irritable, will only last a few weeks at most and they won’t harm you or your baby.
Quitting

Pick a definite date to quit smoking and get the support you need. The sooner, the better for you and your baby’s health.

My quit date is:

--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Getting through the first few days

When it comes to quitting, there’s no magic wand - but there are lots of things you can do to help yourself to quit. Here are some:

• Changing your routine can help.

• Try to avoid places, people or activities that make you feel like smoking.

• If you usually smoke a cigarette after a meal, brush your teeth or chew sugar-free gum instead.
Learn to deal with your cravings

When you feel a craving for a cigarette, remember the ‘4 Ds’.

- **Delay** for at least 3 to 5 minutes and the craving will pass.
- **Drink** a glass of water or fruit juice.
- **Distract** yourself.
- **Deep breaths** – breathe slowly and deeply.

**Stay busy**

- Keep your hands and mouth busy.
- Chew sugar-free gum.
- Snack on fruit and vegetables.
- Drink water.
- Doodle with a pen or pencil (or just chew on the end).
- Rub your tummy.
- Rub on some stretch-mark oil.

**Take it one day at a time**

Concentrate on getting through each day without smoking. Don’t worry about how you’ll manage without cigarettes for the rest of your life.
Withdrawal symptoms

• Dizziness or light-headedness
• Craving for a cigarette
• Tingling sensation in toes or fingers
• Lack of concentration
• Changes in sleep pattern
• Feeling hungrier than usual
• Coughing and bringing up phlegm
• Feeling more sensitive than usual.

Remember, these symptoms are a positive sign that your body is recovering from the harmful effects of smoking. And the good news is that symptoms rarely last more than three weeks.

Consider NRT

Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT) helps people to quit smoking by reducing their withdrawal symptoms from the lack of the drug nicotine. NRT doesn’t contain any of the tar, carbon monoxide or other harmful
chemicals found in cigarettes, and it doesn’t cause cancer. A short course of NRT is safer for you and your baby than continuing to smoke. NRT is not a magic cure, but you are twice as likely to succeed in quitting if you use it.

Remember, it is important to talk to your doctor, midwife or pharmacist before using NRT when you are pregnant.

Staying quit

Once you have stopped smoking, keep reminding yourself why you have quit.

Quitting is a great achievement, with huge benefits for you and your baby.

There will be times when you are tempted to give in and have a cigarette, but if you stay strong and focussed, the moment will pass quickly.
Learn how to deal with temptations.

• Stay busy. Boredom can make smoking seem more important to you than it really is.

• Get good at relaxing. Having a cigarette provides a break for many smokers, a few minutes for themselves. Find a different way to take a break, making yourself a cup of tea or reading a magazine.

• Reward yourself and use some of the money you would normally spend on cigarettes to go to the cinema, or to buy yourself something nice.

• Don’t let your mind trick you with thoughts like “one cigarette won’t hurt” or “I’ll just have one to prove I’ve kicked it”. Recognise these for what they are – just excuses to have a cigarette. Stay strong and don’t give in.

And if you do have a cigarette, see it as a temporary slip-up, not a failure. Remind yourself why you wanted to quit smoking, plan how you will deal with the cravings in the future and have another go.
Help and advice

You can QUIT and we can help!
You’re twice as likely to quit for good with our help.

Contact the HSE QUIT Team

Freefone: 1800 201 203
Email: support@quit.ie
Tweet: @HSEQuitTeam
Facebook: www.facebook.com/HSEQuit
Web: www.quit.ie
Freetext: text QUIT to 50100

Face-to-face clinics

We offer quit-smoking clinics and groups in many areas. You can find contact details on www.quit.ie/clinics or contact the QUIT team on Freefone 1800 201 203.

Health professionals

Your family doctor (GP), midwife, practice nurse, public health nurse or pharmacist can all offer advice and support when you are quitting smoking.