

You can

**QUIT**

We can help



If you're ready to QUIT,  
we're ready to help.

Because if you stop smoking  
for 28 days you're 5 times more  
likely to stop for good.



Read on for the tips, tools and support  
you need to make your last stop



# If you quit smoking for 28 days you're 5 times more likely to stop for good.

If you smoke, quitting is one of the best things you can do for your health. If you are one of the 7 in every 10 people who smoke who want to quit, this booklet can help you to succeed. Remember – it's never too late to quit smoking.

## The good things about quitting

Have a look at the benefits to you when you quit.

<b>When</b>	<b>What</b>
<b>Within 20 mins</b>	Your blood pressure and pulse rate begin to return to normal.
<b>Within 1 day</b>	Your risk of heart attack begins to fall.
<b>Within 2 days</b>	You will have a better sense of taste and smell.
<b>Within 3 days</b>	You will feel fitter as you will be less breathless.
<b>Within 3 weeks</b>	Lung function and circulation improves.
<b>After 1 year</b>	Your risk of sudden death from a heart attack is almost cut in half.
<b>After 5 years</b>	The risk of smoking-related cancers and stroke is greatly reduced.
<b>Within 10-15 years</b>	Risk of heart attack falls to the same as someone who has never smoked. Risk of lung cancer falls to half of that of a non-smoker. Risk of cancer of the mouth, throat, oesophagus, bladder, cervix and pancreas decreases.

### Other benefits of quitting smoking:

- you will have better skin, hair and teeth
- your sense of taste and smell will improve
- there will be no smell of smoke on your clothes
- you will save money

# 10 tips to help you quit

1. **Prepare to quit** – Weigh up the pros and cons. Write down your reasons for quitting and keep them close at hand.
2. **Set a date to quit** – And stick to it.
3. **Support** – Get support from a Stop Smoking Advisor, contact the freephone Quitline 1800 201 203 and also ask your family and friends for support.
4. **Use stop smoking medication** – Using stop smoking medication like varenicline and nicotine replacement therapy will help relieve withdrawal symptoms.
5. **Change your routine and plan ahead** – Replace or change activities that you usually associate with smoking.
6. **Be active** – Regular activity is good for your health and helps you to manage stress.
7. **Think positively** – You may have withdrawal symptoms once you quit smoking. These are positive signs that your body is recovering from the harmful effects of smoking. They will disappear once your body gets used to the change.
8. **Learn to deal with cravings** – Check out the tips for dealing with cravings (5 Ds).
9. **Watch what you eat** – If you are worried about putting on weight, be careful about what you eat.
10. **Take one day at a time** – Remember, every day without smoking is good news for your health, your family and your pocket. If you slip up, all is not lost. Set a new date and start again.

## Some smoking facts

1. 1 in every 2 people who smoke will die of a tobacco-related disease.
2. Tobacco smoke contains over 7,000 chemicals, including tar that can cause cancer, heart disease and stroke.
3. Smoking can take 10-15 quality years off your life which means that many people who smoke suffer a number of chronic illnesses such as Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) or heart disease. The effects of these illnesses reduce your quality of life.
4. When you smoke, you inhale a gas called carbon monoxide which is harmful because it displaces oxygen in the blood and deprives the heart, brain, and other vital organs of oxygen.
5. Smoking stains your teeth and fingers and causes premature ageing. It also makes your hair, clothes and breath smell.

# The 3 steps to quitting are:

**Step 1 Getting ready to quit**

**Step 2 Quitting**

**Step 3 Staying quit**

## Step 1: Getting ready to quit

### Every cigarette is doing you damage

**The sooner you quit, the better for you and your health.**

#### **Are you ready to quit?**

Think carefully about why you're still smoking. Look at the list below – are any of these you?

#### **I haven't got the willpower**

Willpower just means wanting something badly enough. Ask yourself if you really want to quit and if so... go for it! Taking medication to manage cravings will really help.

#### **I'm worried about withdrawal symptoms**

Withdrawal symptoms are a positive sign that your body is recovering from the harmful effects of smoking. Nicotine replacement therapies and other quit smoking medications can reduce withdrawal symptoms.

#### **Smoking helps me cope with stress**

Did you know people who quit smoking actually report feeling less stressed? Work off stress with exercise, talk to a friend or take up a hobby.

#### **It's too late – the damage is probably done**

It's never too late to quit. Once you quit, the benefits start from day one. After a year, you will have cut your risk of heart attack by half.

#### **This isn't the right time**

You might think that there will never be a right time. Think positively. The right time is now.

## Weigh up the pros and cons

Wanting to quit is the key. Once you have decided you want to quit, set a date to quit and stick to it.

**Be prepared:** It may help to write down ‘*what you enjoy about smoking*’ and compare this with ‘*why you want to quit*’. Make a list here and keep it close to hand to remind you why you’re quitting.

## What I enjoy about smoking

Example: “It helps me to relax”

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## Why I want to quit smoking

Example: “I worry about the damage to my health”

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The next step  
can be your  
last stop

Get the tips, tools and  
support you need to  
make your last stop at

**QUIT**.ie



# Your smoking diary

It helps to think about your smoking pattern – the places or situations in which you smoke most. Use the table below to help you.

## Number of cigarettes you smoke

Day	Morning	Afternoon	Evening	Total
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				

**Where do you smoke most and why?** Example: after a meal, watching TV

Day	Where I smoked? Why I needed to? Did I have a craving? Did I light up without thinking? Who was I with? How much did I enjoy it? How did I feel afterwards?
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	



# Step 2: Quitting

## Set a quit date now

My quit date is \_\_\_\_\_

Change your daily routine at the start to avoid situations where you will be tempted.

My difficult times	What do I plan to do at these times?

### Try some of these ideas:

- If you enjoy a cigarette after a meal, chew some sugar-free gum instead of lighting up.
- If you're used to having a cigarette in your hands, for example while chatting on the telephone, find something else to hold, such as a pencil or stress ball.
- Be careful when drinking alcohol – a few drinks can make you forget you've quit smoking and weaken your willpower.
- Try drinking juice or water or eating fruit when you feel like having a cigarette. This will freshen your mouth and help reduce your craving. Each craving only lasts 3-5 minutes and will pass.
- Nicotine replacement therapies and other prescribed medications can help double your chances of quitting.

## Dealing with cravings – the 5 Ds

1. **Delay** at least 3-5 minutes and the urge will pass.
2. **Drink** a glass of water or fruit juice.
3. **Distract** yourself - move away from the situation.
4. **Deep** breaths - breathe slowly and deeply.
5. **Don't dwell on it.**

## Withdrawal symptoms

Not everyone gets withdrawal symptoms when they quit smoking. Withdrawal symptoms are positive signs that your body is recovering from the harmful effects of smoking. They will begin to fade within two to three weeks as you get used to not smoking. The following symptoms are all normal:

- A great desire or craving for a cigarette. Cravings can last for 3-5 minutes and can occur frequently for 2-3 days. Cravings reduce in frequency for the next two weeks but some people can get irregular cravings for a longer period.
- Feeling extra-sensitive or tense (can last for 2-4 weeks).
- Feeling extra-hungry (can last up to several weeks).
- Coughing more and bringing up mucus (can last a couple of days). The body is getting rid of extra mucus which has blocked airways when you smoked.
- Tingling sensations in toes or fingers (can last 1-2 days).
- Dizziness or being light-headed. This is because your body is now getting more oxygen and it can take some time to get used to. (can last 1-2 days).
- Poor concentration (can last a couple of weeks).
- Change in sleep patterns (can last 2-4 weeks).
- Constipation (can last 1-2 weeks).

## Smoking causes serious health problems, but lots of people are afraid they will gain weight if they quit

It is possible to stop smoking AND maintain your weight.

Some people gain weight when they quit smoking and some people don't. In fact, some people have lost weight on quitting smoking. Most of the weight gained after quitting smoking is due to eating more food and the wrong types of food. Plan ahead and have healthy snacks to hand.

If you do gain a few pounds, don't pick up a cigarette! Weight gain from quitting smoking is often temporary.

Remember the hazards of smoking – lung disease, heart disease and cancer will affect your health a lot more than temporary weight gain.

## Tips to help you eat well

- Plan ahead – don't go hungry. Eat three meals every day.  
Try not to skip meals, especially breakfast.
- Only snack if you are hungry and choose your snacks carefully. Healthy snacks include fresh fruit, raw vegetables (celery, carrot sticks, slices of cucumber or peppers), natural yogurt with fruit, or plain popcorn.
- Go for low-fat – avoid fried and high-fat foods such as chips, crisps, nuts, chocolate, cakes and biscuits. Trim the fat off meat before cooking. Processed foods such as sausages and puddings are also high in fat. Watch your portion size.
- Watch what you drink. Low-calorie drinks include water, tomato juice, sugar-free squashes, herbal or fruit teas, low-fat or skimmed milk. High sugar fizzy drinks and alcohol add calories, and can also make you want to snack.

More information is available at the following link [www.hse.ie/healthyeating](http://www.hse.ie/healthyeating)

## Tips to help you be more active

- If you are not regularly active, start slowly with 10-15 minutes of physical activity three or four times a week. Gradually build up to 30 minutes a day, most days of the week. Remember, two or three short sessions can meet your goal of 30 minutes a day.
- Exercise at a pace that suits you. You should sweat slightly and be able to carry on a conversation when exercising (moderate intensity).
- Choose an activity that you enjoy – this will help you to keep it up.  
Go for a walk with a friend, swim and cycle or join a dance class or other activity.
- Build physical activity into your daily routine. Walk to work or the shops, use the stairs instead of the lift.

More information is available at the following link <https://www.getirelandactive.ie/>

If you have any medical problems or concerns, check with your doctor before you start a new activity.

# You can quit, and we can help

Are you ready to try  
to QUIT smoking?

Getting help and support will  
**double your chances**  
of success

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## Step 3: Staying quit

### Do:

**Get help and support** – Contact the Quitline on freephone 1800 201 203 and double your chances of success. We are here to make quitting easier.

**Stay positive** – When you feel tired and tempted to give in, remember how far you've come and why you quit. Stay determined and the temptation will pass.

**Keep busy** – Boredom can make smoking seem more important to you than it really is.

**Be active** – A short walk will give you energy and help to take your mind off cigarettes.

**Save your money and reward yourself** – Take a trip to the cinema, buy yourself a book or some music.

**Be careful when drinking alcohol** – It can affect your willpower.

### Don't:

#### **Don't think 'one cigarette won't hurt'**

Having a cigarette after you have stopped can lead to you having more. This is due to nicotine receptors being stimulated. Even one cigarette can reactivate cravings again. Don't give in.

Don't be tempted to smoke with friends who smoke.

**Change your attitude.** Don't keep thinking that you are making sacrifices and losing something valuable by quitting. Think about the freedom you'll have when you finally break free and of everything you have gained.

Some people may find it takes them a few attempts before they quit for good. If this happens to you, don't lose faith. Think about the reasons you wanted to quit in the first place and get ready to quit again. Remember, you are not alone, we can support you and you can do it!

# Here's how we can help you:

## One-to-one support

### How does it work?

A trained Stop Smoking Advisor will meet with you face to face or phone you weekly to support you through the quitting process. Access to stop smoking clinics is free of charge. This support will start 1 to 4 weeks before your quit date and can continue for up to a year.

### The advisor will help you by:

- making sure you're ready to quit
- asking you about your smoking history and habit
- assessing your nicotine addiction
- identifying your reasons for quitting and any difficulties or risks times for relapse
- helping you make a plan to quit smoking
- measuring your carbon monoxide levels
- recommending any suitable medical treatment, including referring you to your doctor for follow-up

Call the Quitline on freephone **1800 201 203** for one-to-one personal support and advice or get in touch with the face-to-face HSE Stop Smoking Service near you.

<https://www2.hse.ie/quit-smoking/support-services/>

**Group support:** Our group support sessions last 6 weeks. Groups of approximately 15 people, led by a Stop Smoking Advisor meet for about an hour and a half each week.

At the sessions, you can:

- review progress
- address any difficulties
- swap coping tips
- encourage each other

Find out about group support via our Facebook page. [www.facebook.com/HSEquit](http://www.facebook.com/HSEquit)

### [www.quit.ie](http://www.quit.ie)

Visit [www.quit.ie](http://www.quit.ie) for lots of information and support and to sign up for our online Quit plan.

### What is the quit plan?

The quit plan is a personalised online quit support programme tailored to you. It will help identify your smoking triggers, measure your nicotine addiction and track the money you have saved. We will send you emails and text messages based on how often you want to receive them. These messages are designed to help motivate and encourage you to keep on track.

### **Quit text service**

This service will send you motivational text messages to help keep you focused on your quitting journey.

The more support you get, the greater your chances of success so we would encourage you to access all support options together at the same time.

### **Free text QUIT to 50100**

### **[facebook.com/HSEquit](https://www.facebook.com/HSEquit)**

Visit our Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/HSEquit](https://www.facebook.com/HSEquit) for further support from fellow quitters.

You can also get help and advice on quitting from your GP or Pharmacist.

## **Support from family and friends**

You may want to quit smoking but you cannot force others to quit. That's a decision they have to make for themselves. However, you should look for support from family and friends when you are quitting.

### **How your family and friends can help:**

- They can be positive and encouraging. Nagging is not helpful or supportive.
- They can encourage people who smoke not to smoke around you.  
Agree on smoke-free spaces and replace smoking with other activities such as walking, dancing or going to classes.
- They can be supportive before, during and after you quit. This will help you to succeed in the long-term.
- They can let you know about programmes and methods that are available to help you quit.
- They can praise and reward you for your efforts.

## Nicotine replacement therapy (NRT)

Smoking is addictive which means it can be difficult to quit. Nicotine is the ingredient in cigarettes that makes them addictive. This is why it can be hard to give up smoking.

**Nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) is a medication that gives you a low level of nicotine. It does not contain the other poisonous chemicals present in tobacco smoke, for example, tar and carbon monoxide.**

Some people think that using NRT is just swapping one addiction for another. But this isn't true.

Using NRT doubles your chances of quitting smoking.

There are many different types of NRT:

- patches
- gum
- lozenges
- inhalers
- mouth sprays

Your GP, pharmacist or Stop Smoking Advisor can help you decide which type of NRT is right for you.

For NRT to work, you must:

- use it correctly - your Stop Smoking Advisor, pharmacist or GP can explain how
- use it for long enough - usually for 8 to 12 weeks
- use enough of it for your level of nicotine addiction

If you've tried one type of NRT before without success, don't give up on it completely. You may not have used it properly or for long enough. Try again and follow the instructions carefully. You could also be in a different frame of mind the second time around.



# Other quit smoking medications to help you quit

The evidence shows that Varenicline (Champix®) and NRT used in combination is the most effective treatment. Where Varenicline is unsuitable, dual therapy NRT is recommended – a background slow release dose of nicotine in conjunction with a faster acting dose to manage cravings, for example, using patches and gum/mouth spray or lozenges together. These are free to medical card holders when prescribed by your GP.

**Remember:** Always read the instructions and use as directed.

Your pharmacist, GP or local Stop Smoking Advisor can advise you about which is the best treatment for you. They work best over a three-month period so try to stick to this to get the most benefit and the right result: to quit smoking for good!

## E-cigarettes and quitting

Some people consider using e-cigarettes as a substitute for smoking or as a support for quitting. E-cigarettes are still fairly new, so we don't yet know how safe they are or if they help people stop smoking. Because of this, we don't recommend e-cigarettes to help you quit smoking. If you are planning to quit and want help, we can recommend and offer a wide range of safe stop smoking supports. If you choose to use an e-cigarette when you are quitting, you can still avail of the support of the HSE stop smoking services. Our services are there to help and support you in quitting smoking.

## Need more advice and support?

If you've tried to quit before, remember that many people try a few times before they quit for good. Getting help and support increases your chances of success, and remember, if you stop smoking for 28 days you're 5 times more likely to stop for good.

## FURTHER WAYS WE CAN HELP YOU:

Visit [www.quit.ie/clinics](http://www.quit.ie/clinics) for more tips on how to give up.

Call our Quitline on **1800 201 203** to talk to someone who understands and can help you to quit.

Join us on [www.facebook.com/HSEquit](https://www.facebook.com/HSEquit) to experience like-minded people's stories and share your own.

## The HSE Campaign is supported by:

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at **QUIT.ie** or freephone  
**1800 201 203**

# QUIT.ie



**Quit smoking today with our help:**



Sign up to  
the Quit plan



Freephone  
1800 201 203



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