



QUIT.ie

QUIT smoking

A guide for people accessing
mental health services



Mental Health
Ireland

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Introduction

We all know that smoking and second-hand smoke has a negative impact on our physical health. What is not as well known is the negative impact of smoking on mental health and recovery. Quitting smoking improves your mental health – it can reduce depression, anxiety and stress, and improve positive mood and quality of life.

Smoking is a risk factor for developing mental health challenges and can intensify symptoms. Smoking interferes with some medications in ways that can result in higher amounts being needed to have the same healing effect. Smoking negatively affects sleep, contributes to insomnia and causes changes in the brain creating an addiction.

As a person who is being supported by the mental health services, you have the right to ask for support to help you to quit smoking and the right to be given it. You can ask any of the health professionals involved in your care plan or speak to the Peer Support Workers in your service for information.

Part of your recovery process

Quitting smoking can be part of a broader commitment to improving your health, wellbeing and recovery.

Stopping smoking is associated with improvements in depression, anxiety, stress and quality of life.

We know from research that people with lived experience of mental health challenges are just as likely to want to stop smoking. You may feel that you do not have confidence in your ability to quit and you may never have been offered specialist support to quit and live a smoke free life. This booklet will help you on your quit smoking journey.

How to use this booklet

This booklet is divided into 2 sections:

- Section A has information about quitting, why you might think about quitting and what supports are available if you do choose to quit.
- Section B is a handy toolkit that you can use to prepare for and use throughout your quit journey.

Although, you may wish to use this booklet on it's own, we do recommend that you also get support from a stop smoking advisor. This service is free. You can find out more information on the supports available on pages 19-21.



Gina's story

My mother smoked as a form of stress relief, a distraction from and a way of coping with the stresses in her day-to-day life. Smoking was her default coping mechanism. When she felt good and life was going well she was able to cope with day-to-day stresses better, and felt strong enough to attempt to stop smoking but when she was going through challenging times, she smoked more and had less energy and motivation to rely on healthier coping skills like going for walks, meeting with friends. I began to smoke at a young age. When a parent smokes, their children are three times more likely to begin smoking also. Eventually I was able to stop and rely on healthier ways to cope with stress. Education is so important to develop better skills to cope with life's stresses; when we are in a stronger place to make a decision to stop smoking, we are better prepared and will have better chances at being successful.

Gina, Mental Health Ireland Development Officer

Section A

Why think about quitting smoking?

If you smoke, quitting is one of the best things you can do for your health.

Seven out of every 10 people who smoke want to quit. If you're one of them, this booklet can help you to succeed.

There is information in this booklet on:

- Support available to quit smoking
- Reasons to quit smoking
- Tips to help you quit smoking
- Medicines that can help you quit smoking.

Remember, it is never too late to quit smoking and you should never give up trying.

The health and other benefits of quitting start right away

When you stop smoking, you will:

- improve your breathing and reduce the strain on your heart and lungs
- protect your family from second-hand smoke
- improve the air quality in your home
- have nicer smelling clothes
- be a good role model for your family and friends
- save money
- have better skin, teeth and hair
- save time and energy – you will not have to think about when and where you can smoke.

Quit smoking for 28 days, you're 5 times more likely to quit for good

Smoking facts

Every week, almost

100
people die and
1,000

people are hospitalised
in Ireland from a
smoking-related illness.



Quitting smoking
can improve anxiety
and depression
as much as
antidepressants.



Smoking takes 10 to 15 years
off your life and can cause:

- cancer
- heart attacks
- stroke
- lung disease
- blindness.



Smoking is linked
to an increased
risk of dementia,
diabetes and many
other diseases.



Smoking has a
negative effect
on your mental
health.



Smoking reduces fertility for
both women and men and
makes it harder to get pregnant.
It can lead to:

- ectopic pregnancy
- miscarriage
- stillbirth
- poor growth of
the preterm baby.



It is an expensive
habit – smoking
20 cigarettes a day
adds up to over
€6,500 a year.



83% of smokers
regret starting smoking.
If they had the choice
again, they would
have never started.

Benefits of quitting smoking

As you contemplate quitting smoking or while on your journey, remember there are so many benefits mentally, physically and socially.

Mental health benefits

Stopping smoking can improve your mood and help relieve stress, anxiety and depression. When people stop smoking, they:

- reduce levels of anxiety, depression and stress
- feel better about themselves
- feel more in control
- can get better quality sleep.

Stopping smoking can help reduce symptoms of anxiety disorders and depression in the same way as being treated with antidepressants. There is a common misunderstanding that smoking relieves stress or anxiety and improves your mood. However, withdrawal from nicotine in cigarettes can cause symptoms similar to anxiety.

When you are addicted to nicotine, your body goes through periods where nicotine levels are high (just like after a cigarette or vape).

Likewise, your body has periods where nicotine levels are low (like a few hours after your last cigarette or vape).

The symptoms of withdrawal when nicotine levels drop in your body are similar to the symptoms of anxiety and stress. This is why people sometimes think that smoking helps with their stress and anxiety.

Smoking and medications

Smoking has negative effects on mood but it also interferes with the way some antipsychotic medicines and antidepressants work - smokers may need higher doses. Quitting smoking can reduce the amount of medication you need to maintain your mental health which can reduce medication side effects.

Physical health benefits

The benefits from stopping smoking increase over time.



After 20 minutes

Your circulation improves. Your blood pressure and heart rate get lower, which means your risk of a heart attack starts to reduce.

After 8 hours

The carbon monoxide (poisonous gas) levels in your blood go down and the oxygen level rises.



After 48 hours

Carbon monoxide leaves your body. Your sense of smell and taste starts to improve.



After 2–3 months

Your lung capacity could increase by up to 30%.

After 72 hours

Your breathing improves and your energy levels increase.



After 1 year

Your chance of having a heart attack drops by half.



After 10 years

Your risk of lung cancer is reduced by half.

After 5 years

Your risk of smoking-related cancers is greatly reduced.



After 15 years

Your risk of having a heart attack is now the same as a non-smoker.





Derek's story – Part 1

Being on the end of a cigarette

I was smoking on and off socially for years and then when I was 20 years of age I began to smoke more often, 10 a day in fact.

I thought wrongly I could be acceptable and have friends if I smoked. I thought it was an entry portal to the milestones and rites of passage of my life. I entrusted too much to smoking and I believed wrongly it was the edge I needed to succeed.

Skip forward 5 years and I am a 20 a day man when I could afford it, and a 10 a day man when I couldn't afford it.

I knew I wanted to quit as I had examples of elderly smokers where I lived and I did not want to end up like them, which was desperation quite often for a cigarette because of addiction.

I resolved to quit. I lasted for 10 weeks but then started smoking again. My next quit stint lasted for 3 days. I realised these things were cancer sticks and they were also bad for my pocket yet I still scrimped and saved every week to feed my habit.

Then one December time about 20 years ago I got the idea that I would quit cigarettes for good some day soon. 2 days later I started the patches. It was not an unusual experience and I had no idea at the start that this would be the time I would eventually quit them.

Read the rest of Derek's story on page 18.

Quitting smoking

When you are ready to quit smoking, follow these three steps to quitting

Step 1

Prepare to quit

Step 2

Set a quit date

Step 3

Stay quit

Step 1: Prepare to quit

The sooner you quit, the better for you and your health.
Are you ready to quit?

Here are some things to think about while you get ready to quit.

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 nicotine replacement therapies (NRT) to manage cravings will really help.

I am worried about withdrawal symptoms.

Withdrawal symptoms are a positive sign that your body is recovering from the harmful effect of smoking. NRT can reduce withdrawal symptoms.

Smoking helps me cope with stress.

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

The HSE has information and advice about your health and wellbeing. Please go to **yourmentalhealth.ie** for support.

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.



Step 2: Set a quit date

Remember: If you are on medication to support your mental health, let your prescribing doctor know you are quitting smoking. They will support you with any adjustments to medication that may be needed.

It is important to set a quit date that you can stick to.

My quit date is ____ / ____ / ____

Once you have set a quit date, think about the situations where you smoke or normally want to smoke and think about what you can do instead.

There is space in Section B, page 37 for you to write down your own ideas.

Cravings and withdrawal when you stop smoking

Most people experience some nicotine cravings and withdrawal symptoms when they quit smoking. These can be uncomfortable, but they are temporary. Most symptoms stop after a month.

You may experience some symptoms, but you probably won't experience them all.

If you're concerned about any symptoms, talk to:

- your GP
- your stop smoking advisor – they can give you information and advice on how to stop smoking and how to manage cravings and withdrawals.

Cravings

The cravings you have depend on how often you smoked and how long you were a smoker.

Cravings for nicotine can start 30 minutes after your last cigarette. Individual cravings usually pass in 3 to 5 minutes.

You may get the most cravings 2 to 3 days after you stop smoking. While you may have cravings for some time after you quit smoking, this will happen less often and they will be less intense. You will also learn how to cope with these over time.

Deal with cravings by using the **4Ds**:

Delay



Delay at least 3-5 minutes and the urge will pass.

Drink



Drink a cold glass of water or fruit juice.

Distract

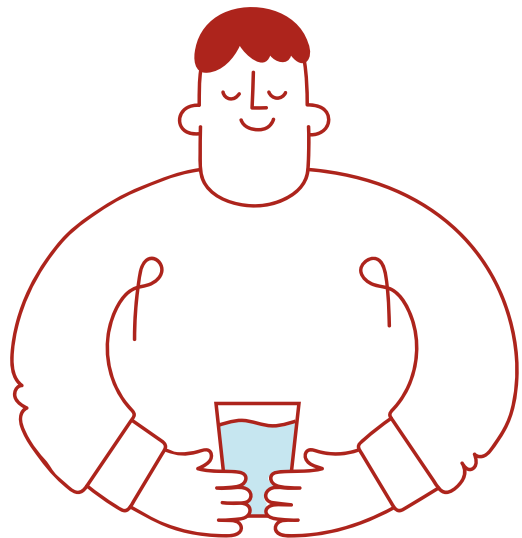


Distract yourself by focusing on something else.

Deep breaths



Deep breaths – take 20 deep breaths.



Withdrawal symptoms and what can help

Cough

Coughing more than usual is a common withdrawal symptom of quitting smoking. This is a sign that your body is starting to heal, as it clears the mucus that has built up in your lungs. Speak to your pharmacist or GP if this is causing you discomfort.

Moods, irritability and anxiety

When you give up smoking, you may:

- have low moods
- feel more irritable and anxious.

These feelings are temporary and get better within about 4 weeks.

Here are some coping strategies:

- congratulate yourself for coping with life without smoking
- ask others to understand and be patient
- do things that make you feel good.



You can relax and reduce stress with activities you enjoy, like:

- physical activities like walking, jogging, dancing, cycling or swimming
- listening to music, reading, doing a puzzle or gardening
- relaxation and deep breathing exercises – for example, take 20 deep breaths.



Headaches

Nicotine withdrawal when you stop smoking can cause headaches. They usually stop within 3 to 4 weeks.

To reduce headaches, make sure you:

- drink plenty of water
- eat regularly
- take regular physical activity.

Nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) can also help reduce withdrawal symptoms.

Sleep problems

You may have sleep problems after stopping smoking. These usually stop after 2 to 3 weeks.

To improve your sleep you can try to:

- reduce your caffeine intake, like avoiding tea, coffee or cola
- do physical activity during the day
- relax before bedtime with a book or a bath
- stop your screen time (TV, phone or computers) for an hour before bed
- do mindfulness or meditation before bed.

Constipation and feeling sick

About 1 in 10 people get constipation when they give up smoking. It can take 2 to 3 weeks to get better. Constipation can happen with feeling sick (nausea). Some people can have nausea without constipation.

Changes to your diet and lifestyle can help:

- eat lots of fruit, fibre and vegetables
- drink lots of water
- do physical activity every day.

A pharmacist can recommend treatments to ease the problem.

Energy levels

Your energy might increase after you stop smoking. This is because more oxygen is getting into your bloodstream as the carbon monoxide has left your body.

The extra oxygen may also cause you to feel dizzy or light-headed for 1 to 2 days. This is normal as your body gets used to the extra oxygen.

Some people find that they have less energy for a while. This is because the body stops producing adrenaline in response to nicotine. It's temporary and improves after 2 to 3 weeks.

Weight gain

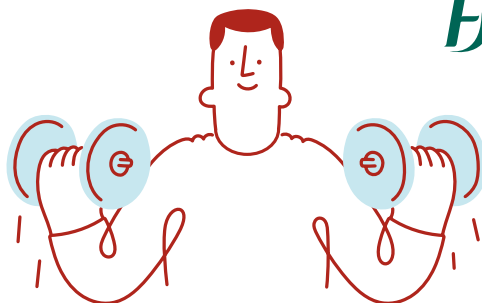
Most smokers worry that giving up smoking will make them gain weight. It can happen if you confuse cravings for nicotine with cravings for food and replace smoking with snacking. But you can avoid gaining any weight if you eat sensibly and get more active.

If you are worried about weight gain:

- remember that stopping smoking is the most important thing you can do for your health
- eat 3 balanced meals a day, with plenty of vegetables and fruit
- keep healthy snacks close by – such as carrot sticks or fruit
- drink water or low-calorie drinks and avoid sugary soft drinks.



Tips to stay active



| | |
|--|---|
| Move | Anyone can get active and it's never too late to start. Anything that gets you moving will benefit you, whatever your age. |
| Enjoy | Chose an activity that you enjoy, it will be easier to keep it up. |
| Start slowly | <p>If you are not regularly active:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● start slowly with 10–15 minutes, three to four times a week ● gradually build up to 30 minutes a day, most days of the week. |
| Pace yourself | Exercise at a pace that suits you. You should sweat slightly and be able to carry on a conversation when exercising. |
| Avoid boring activity | If you get bored with an activity, try a different one. |
| Be kind to yourself | Everyone has days when they might not do some or all of an activity. Just get back on track the next day. |
| Build physical activity into your daily routine | <p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● walk to work or the shops ● use the stairs instead of a lift. |
| Check with your doctor if needed | If you have any medical problems or concerns, check with your doctor before you start a new activity. |

Step 3: Stay quit

To help you stay off cigarettes, do some or all of the following:

| | |
|---|---|
| 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. |
| Be active | Choose an activity that you enjoy, it will be easier to keep it up. |
| Keep busy | Boredom can make smoking seem more important to you than it really is. |
| Save your money and reward yourself | Take a trip to the cinema, buy yourself a gift or an item of clothing that you like. |
| Be careful when drinking alcohol | A few drinks can make you forget that you have quit smoking and weaken your willpower. |
| Remember not to have a puff of a cigarette | Having even one puff of a cigarette after you have quit can lead to more. This is due to the nicotine receptors being stimulated and the feel-good endorphins being released. |
| Change your attitude towards smoking | Think about the freedom you'll have when you finally break free and take back control. |
| Don't lose faith | Some people may find that it takes a few attempts before they quit for good. If this happens to you, think about the reasons you wanted to quit in the first place and get ready to quit again. |

Remember you are not alone, the HSE QUIT team are here to help.

You can contact a trained stop smoking advisor to support you.

**Freephone: 1800 201 203
or Free text: QUIT to 50100**

Tips on changing your habits

Your normal habits and routines may make you want to smoke, especially if cigarettes were a part of your routine.

These are things you can do to try to change your habits:

- brush your teeth and use mouthwash first thing in the morning
- brush your teeth after meals if you can, or move to another room
- change your usual drink so you do not associate the new drink with smoking
- chew sugarless gum in situations where you used to smoke
- walk away from others who are smoking
- distract yourself by scrolling on your phone or log into your QUIT plan
- try deep breathing
- change your routine before bed – have a bath or read a book.





Derek's story – Part 2

Being on the end of a cigarette

I had been living with two people who smoked and both of them moved out. That was my chance to quit for good. I used the nicotine patches and kept using them for 12 weeks as recommended.

I think the key to me quitting was my persistence and the change in circumstances which took the smokers out of my residence.

Financially I am in the region of €140,000 better off since I quit and this is conservative as it is my opinion I wouldn't have been able to work full time for the last 20 years if I was a smoker. I just couldn't have pulled that trick of full time working really.

Fitness wise I have completed 6 marathons in the last 11 years. Additionally in terms of the breathing, I now am part of a church choir and I can practice controlled coughing when required during the performance of a song. If I was a smoker my coughing during such stresses as singing would be uncontrollable rendering the performance in a choir impossible.

Imagine never discovering you have a good melodic voice because of the practice of smoking. I'm so glad I quit and discovered a hidden talent into the bargain!

The adage is true- "if at first you don't succeed try, try and try again".

Derek Walsh

Get help when you quit smoking

If you want to stop smoking, getting the right help can double your chances of success.

You can also get help to quit through:

- one-to-one sessions at a stop-smoking clinic in your area or on the phone
- group support sessions
- our online **QUIT plan**
- our QUIT text service
- information on our quit.ie page or app
- support from family and friends.

Whether you choose one-to-one support or attend a group, the stop smoking advisors will:

- ask about your smoking history and habit
- assess your nicotine addiction
- measure your carbon monoxide levels
- recommend medical treatment that might work for you.

Our stop smoking advisors know how hard it is to quit. They will support you every step of the way without judgement.

One-to-one support

At our stop-smoking clinics, we offer one-to-one support by phone, video call or in person. This support is free.

A stop smoking advisor will support you through the quitting process. This starts 1 to 4 weeks before your quit date and can continue for up to a year.

Group support

Our 'We Can QUIT' group support sessions last 7 to 12 weeks. Groups meet for an hour and a half, once a week.

The groups can be female only, male only or mixed. The sessions are run by local organisations in places like community centres or family resource centres.

The sessions are facilitated by a trained stop smoking advisor.

At the sessions, you can:

- check your progress
- talk about any difficulties you are having
- swap coping tips
- encourage each other.

Find out more at hse.ie/wecanquit

QUIT plan

You can sign up for a free, personalised QUIT plan to help you stop smoking.

You decide how you want your plan to work and can get:

- daily support by email and text message
- a QUIT account to track your progress
- one-to-one support from a trained stop smoking advisor
- tips from people who've successfully stopped smoking.

HSE App

You can also get support and find out more information by downloading the HSE app.

QUIT text service

You can receive motivational text messages to help keep you focused on your quitting journey.

Free text QUIT to 50100



Online support

‘You Can QUIT’ is an online community for people trying to quit smoking. To find out more, visit our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/hsequit

Support from family and friends

You should look for support from family and friends when you are quitting.

How your family and friends can help:

- tell them that you have quit smoking and ask them to be positive and patient
- ask them to get involved in a new activity with you, like walking or taking up a new class.

If you have a friend or family member that smokes:

- ask them not to smoke around you and not to offer you cigarettes
- agree on smoke-free spaces, for example, create a smoke-free home and car.

You may want to quit smoking, but you cannot force others to quit. That is a decision they have to make for themselves.

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.

It is what makes it hard to give up smoking.

What is NRT?

NRT are licenced medicines that give you a low level of nicotine. They do not contain the other poisonous chemicals present in tobacco smoke. For example, tar and carbon monoxide.

There are different types of NRT:

- patch
- gum
- lozenge
- mouth spray.

Your GP, pharmacist or stop smoking advisor can help you decide which type of NRT is right for you.

How does NRT work?

NRT provides just enough nicotine to relieve cravings and withdrawal symptoms, like:

- restlessness
- anxiety
- lack of concentration
- hunger pangs.

NRT relieves physical withdrawal symptoms. This helps you to focus on the psychological (emotional) aspects of quitting.

For NRT to work, you must use it:

- the right way – your stop smoking advisor, pharmacist or GP can explain how
- for long enough – usually for 8 to 12 weeks
- at the right amount for your level of nicotine addiction.

What is Combination NRT?

We recommend combination nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) as the best way to stop smoking. Combination NRT means using:

- a fast-acting form of NRT (gum, lozenge or mouth spray), and
- a nicotine patch at the same time.

Getting NRT

You can get free NRT when you sign up to the stop smoking programme.

To get free NRT, you can contact:

- our stop smoking advisors – they will arrange for you to get NRT through your GP or participating pharmacy
- our QUIT line on 1800 201 203
- your GP – if you have a medical card.

You can also buy NRT in pharmacies or some supermarkets.

There are some situations when you might need medical supervision before starting NRT.

Talk to your GP if you:

- are pregnant
- are under 18
- have recently had a heart attack.



Side effects of NRT

NRT is a safe medicine. People who use it rarely experience problems. Read the instructions before you use NRT. Side effects are usually mild, but talk to your GP, stop smoking advisor or pharmacist if you are worried. You may need to change the dose or type of NRT.



If NRT did not work for you in the past

If you have tried one type of NRT before without success, do not 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 this time.

NRT is not swapping one addiction for another

Some people think that using NRT is just swapping one addiction for another but this is not true. Using NRT doubles your chances of quitting smoking compared to quitting cold turkey.

The nicotine levels in NRT are much lower than in tobacco. The way they deliver nicotine makes them less addictive than smoking.

Most health problems are caused by other components in tobacco smoke, not by the nicotine. It is safer to use licenced nicotine-containing products than to smoke.

People who use NRT can reduce their use of it over time and eventually stop using it. A stop smoking advisor can talk to you about how to use NRT in a way that is safe and that works.

Prescription treatments to quit smoking

You can get medicine on prescription to help you stop smoking. They are used under medical supervision.

Your GP or a stop smoking advisor can help you decide the best treatment for you.

Prescription treatments can reduce cravings and withdrawal symptoms.

Make an appointment with your GP before you plan to give up smoking.

You need to start taking the medicine around 2 weeks before your quit date.

Varenicline (formerly known as Champix)

This medicine:

- acts on your brain to reduce cravings for and symptoms of nicotine withdrawal
- is taken for 12 weeks and you continue to smoke for the first 7 to 14 days.

Zyban

This medicine:

- acts on your brain to help treat nicotine addiction
- is taken for 11 weeks and you continue to smoke for the first two weeks.

Varenicline and Zyban do not contain nicotine.

You can use a prescription medicine in combination with NRT.

It is safe and recommended in Ireland's National Clinical Guideline on Stop Smoking Care.

Section B

This section of the booklet will help you on your quit journey. You can use it to record your progress. There are also some activities that you can complete and useful tips to help you along the way.

My quit journey

Contact details of your stop smoking advisor

Name

Phone number

My weekly appointments

| Date | Time | Location (in person, over the phone) |
|------|------|--------------------------------------|
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My personal carbon monoxide chart

Carbon monoxide (CO) is a poisonous gas. It has no colour or smell. Tobacco smoke contains CO.

Your stop smoking advisor can measure your CO levels at your appointments and you can keep a record of them here.

Record your weekly CO readings

| | My CO level | Date |
|--------|-------------|------|
| Week 1 | | |
| Week 2 | | |
| Week 3 | | |
| Week 4 | | |
| Week 5 | | |
| Week 6 | | |
| Week 7 | | |
| | | |
| | | |
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| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

Use this chart to see what these readings mean:

| CO (ppm) | What does this mean? |
|----------|----------------------|
| Above 30 | |
| 30 | |
| 29 | |
| 28 | |
| 27 | |
| 26 | |
| 25 | |
| 24 | |
| 23 | |
| 22 | |
| 21 | |
| 20 | |
| 19 | |
| 18 | |
| 17 | |
| 16 | |
| 15 | |
| 14 | |
| 13 | |
| 12 | |
| 11 | |
| 10 | |
| 9 | |
| 8 | |
| 7 | |
| 6 | |
| 5 | |
| 4 | |
| 3 | |
| 2 | |
| 1 | |

What does this mean?

Smoker

If you have not yet quit, it is normal to be in the range highlighted in red.

When you smoke, you breathe CO into your lungs. CO then gets into your blood. This stops oxygen getting around your body.

This means that your heart doesn't get enough oxygen. This can cause heart attack and stroke. You can also get out of breath easily.

Non-smoker

For a non-smoker, it is normal to have a CO reading of between 1 and 6.

When you quit smoking, CO leaves your body.

There is now a good supply of oxygen to the heart and lungs.

Smoke Free Bingo¹

Throughout your quit smoking journey, complete the bingo card to celebrate important milestones when you **did not smoke**.

There is space at the bottom of the bingo chart for you to add your own personal milestones.

| Smoke-Free Bingo | | | | |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| When in the car | After lunch | When stressed | When I am bored | When feeling anxious |
| At a family gathering | While drinking coffee or tea | As a reward | After an argument | Having received good news |
| Before going to bed | At a party | When I'm feeling lonely | When drinking alcohol | While on holiday |
| When I'm upset or worried | When someone else smokes | After dinner | When I get up | After breakfast |
| During me-time | While waiting for the bus | Having received bad news | When someone offers me a cigarette | After sex |
| | | | | |

¹ Adapted with permission from the Trimbos-instituut, Netherlands

Relaxation exercise

Practice this technique every day to get the best effect. Practicing relaxation techniques is a great way to cope with stress and help with urges to smoke.

You may also find it useful to record yourself reading this and then play it for yourself.

- Sit in a comfortable position, with both feet firmly on the ground
- Close your eyes
- Place your left hand on your stomach and your right hand on your chest
- Breathing normally, feel your chest rise and fall as you breath in and out
- Slowly count from one to four as you breathe in through your nose
- Pause for two seconds
- Mentally count from one to six as you breathe out through your mouth
- As you continue to breathe like this, try to shift most of the movement towards the hand on your stomach
- Allow your stomach to push your hand out as you breathe in and pull your stomach in, letting your hand fall as you breathe out
- After several minutes of slow, rhythmic breathing, allow your hands to move freely in and out during each breath
- Slowly open your eyes and sit quietly.

You can also check out Mental Health Ireland's "The mindfulness pause" to listen to other meditations: <https://www.mentalhealthireland.ie/the-mindful-pause/> or scan the QR code:



There are also some mindful colouring activities in this booklet, which you may like to complete.

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 Nicotine Replacement Therapies (NRT)** - NRT 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** – Try using the 4Ds:
 - **Delay** at least 3-5 minutes and the urge will pass
 - **Drink** a glass of water or fruit juice
 - **Distract** yourself – by focusing on something else
 - **Deep breaths** – take 20 deep breaths
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.

Pre-quit

Think about the good and bad

It may help to write down what you:

- like and don't like about smoking
- think is good and bad about quitting.

You can use the example below to make a list.

Keep your list close to hand to remind you why you're quitting.

What I like about smoking

| |
|---|
| 1 |
| 2 |
| 3 |
| 4 |

What I don't like about smoking

| |
|---|
| 1 |
| 2 |
| 3 |
| 4 |

The bad things about quitting are

| |
|---|
| 1 |
| 2 |
| 3 |
| 4 |

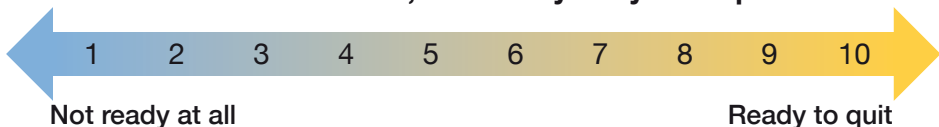
The good things about quitting are

| |
|---|
| 1 |
| 2 |
| 3 |
| 4 |

Think about how ready you are to quit

Now that you have looked at the good and bad of smoking and quitting smoking, do you think you are ready to quit?

On a scale of 1–10, how ready are you to quit?



Counting the cost

Smoking is expensive and saving money may be a reason for you to quit smoking.

Use the table below to work out how much smoking is costing you.

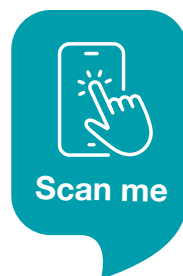
How much do you spend on cigarettes € a day each day?

That's: € x 7 = € a week

€ x 52 = € a year

What could you spend this money on instead?

If you prefer you can use the savings calculator on the HSE website:
quit.hse.ie/savings-calculator
or scan the QR code opposite:



What are your reasons for quitting?




Now write down your reasons for quitting

[illegible]














































My Smoking diary

It is helpful to know when and why you smoke during the day. Over the next week, choose one day and use the table below to keep a note of your nicotine cravings for that day. This will help you plan how to manage these cravings in the future.

Here is an example:






| Time of cigarette | What I was doing at this time | How much I need to smoke | | | | | Number I smoked | How much I enjoyed it | | |
|-------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------|---|---|---|---|-----------------|---|---|---|
| 5.30pm | Walking the dog | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 2 |  |  |  |







Day: _____

| Time of cigarette | What I was doing at this time | How much I need to smoke | | | | | Number I smoked | How much I enjoyed it | | |
|-------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------|---|---|---|---|-----------------|---|--|---|
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |  |  |  |
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |  |  |  |
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |  |  |  |
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |  |  |  |
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |  |  |  |
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |  |  |  |
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |  |  |  |
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |  |  |  |
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |  |  |  |
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |  |  |  |
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |  |  |  |
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |  |  |  |
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |  |  |  |
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |  |  |  |
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |  |  |  |

Coping with withdrawals

Not everyone will experience all of these withdrawal symptoms and the intensity of them will vary from person to person.

| Symptom | When will it pass? | What can help? | What I will do? |
|--|--------------------|---|-----------------|
| Urges to smoke  | Over time | Each urge will pass in a few minutes Remember the 4Ds <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delay • Drink water • Distract • Deep breaths | |
| Dizziness  | Days 1-2 | Move slowly when you are getting up or changing position | |
| Cough, dry throat, nasal drip  | Days 2-7 | Drink plenty of fluids Avoid additional stress | |
| Constipation, stomach pain and gas  | Weeks 1-2 | Eat a healthy diet Drink water | |
| A depressed mood  | Weeks 1-2 | Increase activities you enjoy Talk to a friend or family member | |

| Symptom | When will it pass? | What can help? | What I will do? |
|--|--------------------|---|-----------------|
| Anxiety and restlessness  | Weeks 1-2 | Take breaths or meditate | |
| Difficulty getting to sleep  | Weeks 2-4 | Avoid tea, coffee or other drinks with caffeine late at night | |
| Fatigue  | Weeks 2-4 | Take naps Do not push yourself | |
| Hard to concentrate  | Weeks 2-4 | Plan work carefully | |
| Irritability  | Week 4 | Exercise | |
| Increased appetite  | Week 11 | Eat healthy snacks Drink water | |

Setting a quit date and my quitting plan

Now that you have decided that you are ready to quit and you have put in place some coping strategies, it is time to set a quit date. It is also a good idea to start thinking about changing your routines, in particular, the ones that you associate with smoking.

My quit date is ____ / ____ / ____

and after that date, I will not have a single puff of a cigarette.

My difficult times

E.g. Having a cup of coffee

What I plan to do at these times

I will drink tea instead

Support

Who will I ask to support me?

What support will I ask for?

Don't forget to let your prescribing doctor know you are quitting smoking. They will support you with any adjustments to medication that may be needed.

My goals for this week – preparation for quitting

1

2

3

4

5

Reflection on challenges I have overcome this week

Quit date

Breaking the link with cigarettes

There may be times this week when you will get urges or cravings to smoke. There is often something that will trigger these cravings. These triggers can be people, places or things and are personal to each individual.

Record when you have had a craving; what you did to manage it and if there is something else that you could do in the future?

| Date | Time | What was I doing | How did I deal with it? | Is there anything else I could have done? |
|--------------------|--------|---|---------------------------|---|
| e.g. 21.02.2024 | 1:30pm | Having a cup of coffee after my lunch with a friend | I drank my coffee indoors | Read a book or a magazine |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |

My goals for this week

1

2

3

4

5

Reflection on challenges I have overcome this week

Some people enjoy colouring as a way of relaxing or distracting themselves. Here's one for you.



1 week quit

How to deal with cravings

Remember the 4 Ds

- Delay
- Drink water
- Distract and
- Deep breaths.

Use your nicotine replacement therapy

- Put your patch on every morning
- Use your oral product (lozenge, gum, or mouth spray) every hour on the hour to prevent urges.

Change your routines linked to smoking

Change your routine and plan ahead for the times during the day when you used to smoke. You can use the template below to help you plan this. There are some examples and you can add your own:

| My day | What I will do instead of smoking... |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| In the morning | |
| When having tea or coffee | |
| When I am driving | |
| When I feel stressed | |
| When I am meeting friends | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |

My goals for this week

1

2

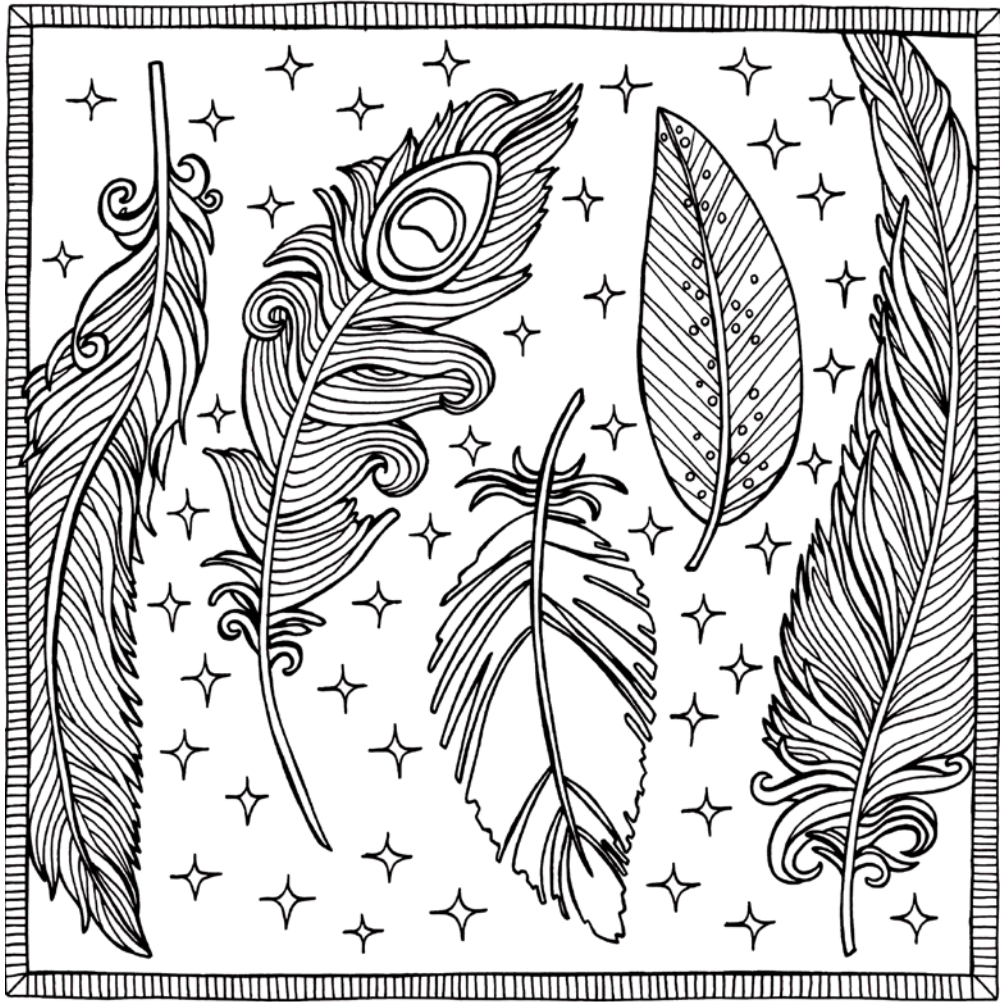
3

4

5

Reflection on challenges I have overcome this week





2 weeks quit

Self-care

It is important that you take care of and be gentle with yourself. You could try some meditation, take a walk, or talk to a friend. Remember the following:

- Stay positive
- Keep busy
- Be active
- Save and reward
- Be careful when drinking alcohol
- Always remember the “Not a Puff” rule.

My goals for this week

1

2

3

4

5

Reflection on challenges I have overcome this week



3 weeks quit

Marking achievements

Write down any of the benefits that you have noticed over the last 3 weeks:

Health

Social/Relationships

Financial/money

Other

My goals for this week

1

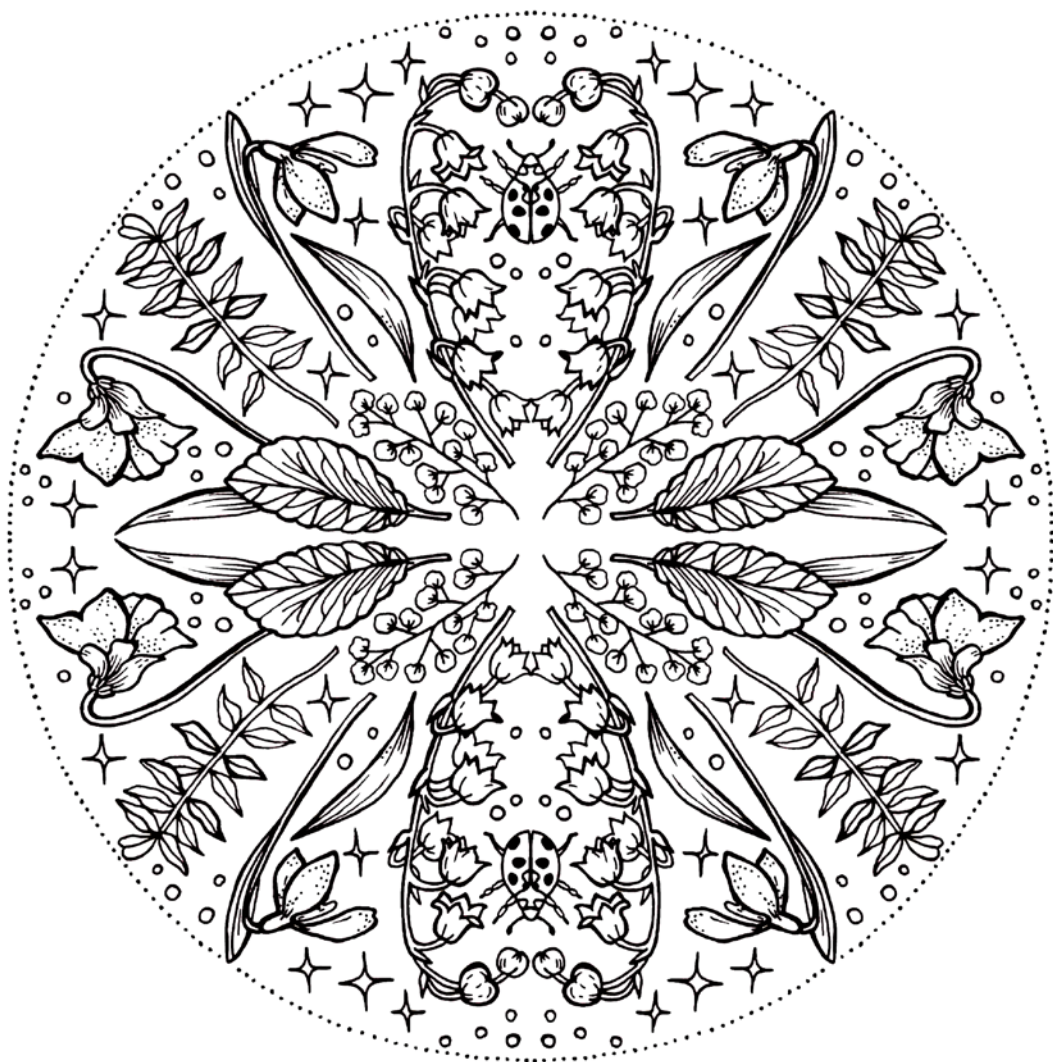
2

3

4

5

Reflection on challenges I have overcome this week



4 weeks quit

Acknowledging my success and planning for the future

Congratulations, you are 28 days smoke free

Write down what you have achieved over this month:

Number of days I have been smoke free:

Number of cigarettes that I have not smoked:

Amount of money I have saved:

How I am feeling now:

What will I do from here:



My future goals

1

2

3

4

5

Reflection on challenges I have overcome so far

Remember; do not have even one puff of a cigarette. This will give you the best possible chance of staying quit for good.





Below are links and QR codes to videos that explain how to use the NRT products.

How to use the nicotine patch

https://youtu.be/MbFf0F_qG_I



How to use the nicotine lozenge

<https://youtu.be/E3KQ8fWBGsQ>



How to use the nicotine gum

<https://youtu.be/G2Qbd5EYGsg>



How to use the nicotine mouth spray

<https://youtu.be/z6OoxlnAsOo>



Stop smoking for 28 days
and you're 5 times more
likely to **quit for good**



Quit smoking today with our help

For tips, tools and support:



Sign up to
the quit plan at
QUIT.ie



Freephone
1800 201 203



Free text
QUIT
to 50100

QUIT.ie



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



[@HSEQuitTeam](https://twitter.com/HSEQuitTeam)



[instagram.com/hse_quit](https://www.instagram.com/hse_quit)