

*Better
Together*

Patient information

How to Stop Smoking Before Your Operation

Fag Ends can help you stop smoking before your operation.

To contact Fag Ends for help to stop smoking please call
Freephone: 0800 195 2131 or contact our Fag Ends Stop Smoking Advisor on Tel: 0151 706 2332.

You can telephone these numbers in complete confidence for information or advice without committing yourself to giving up smoking.

Now that you are due to have an operation it is very important that you stop smoking.

Smoking can delay your recovery from an operation

Smoking affects your heart, lungs, circulation and many other parts of your body. Even if you can only manage to give up a short time before your surgery, your rate of recovery will improve greatly. This is true whatever operation you are having.

Research has shown that stopping smoking six to eight weeks before your operation can help to reduce the risks of complications and wound healing.

Thinking about stopping?

You may find it easier than you thought to stop smoking. Before an operation is an ideal time to stop. Even if you are only able to give up for a few weeks, it will be worthwhile, and you may be able to give up for even longer. If you can say to yourself “I am going to stop tomorrow”, and do it, that is great, but you may find that you need to work at stopping smoking. Here is how you can do it.

Choose the date

The first thing you have to do is make up your mind that you are going to stop and really mean it.

- Set a date when you will definitely stop. It may be tomorrow or at the weekend but do not leave it for more than a week.
- Tell everybody you can that you are going to give up on that day. That may make it easier to stick to it.
- Make the most of the time before you stop smoking to prepare for the day when you are going to stop.

Prepare to stop

Avoid temptation

Get rid of all your cigarettes (or cigars or tobacco) from the house, car and where you work. Make it difficult for yourself to snatch a cigarette in a moment of crisis. Put away your ashtrays, matches and lighters that will remind you about smoking.

Change your habits

Think about when and where you usually smoke. Do you always smoke after breakfast, after other meals, with a drink, when you're with friends, when you are on the phone, in breaks at work or when you get home and put your feet up? Once you know when and where you usually smoke, you can begin to work out ways of avoiding the temptation.

For example, if you always smoke with a cup of tea or coffee, then it is going to help if you drink something else for a while, like fruit juice or milk.

Or if you always smoke after a meal, it will help if you get up straight away and do something else instead, like taking a walk. Write down how you are going to start some new habits to help you to break the old habit of smoking

The day you stop

Plan your day.

Try to do things that you know will not make you want a cigarette. Remember that from today you are no longer a smoker trying to give up. Tell yourself that you are a non-smoker.

Do not think about all the days ahead.

Just work at getting through today without a cigarette and take each day as it comes. You could plan a treat for the end of the day to reward yourself for not smoking. Have something special to eat. Or go out somewhere – somewhere you will be less likely to want a smoke.

Staying stopped

You are over the first day and now you have to make sure you stay stopped. For some people, this is the difficult time, but it is easier when you know it is going to help you get over your operation. If people offer you cigarettes, you can tell them why you have stopped smoking and why it is so important.

Need more help

Many people need help to give up. Your local NHS service '**Fag Ends**', is there for just that reason. We offer friendly advice and help to smokers who really want to quit.

Support can help you:

- Make a plan to stop
- Cope with cravings
- Stay stopped

Help is given either on an individual basis or through a series of group meetings.

You can contact Fag Ends using the freephone number 0800 195 2131; by asking your doctor, nurse or pharmacist about referral; or by contacting our Stop Smoking Advisor on: 0151 706 2332.

What about the nicotine?

Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT) really does help people to quit! All products are available over the counter at your local pharmacy and your doctor or nurse may be able to prescribe them for you.

NRT works by delivering nicotine into your body without the tar, carbon monoxide and other poisonous chemicals that are found in tobacco.

Once your nicotine withdrawal symptoms are controlled you will find it easier to kick the habit. NRT is much safer than smoking. The biggest problem is that people do not use enough to help with the cravings or they stop using it too soon. If you decide to use NRT remember you may not be able to use it on the day of the operation. The hospital needs to be aware you are using NRT.

Is NRT safe?

NRT is much safer and less addictive than cigarettes. You cannot overdose on NRT – just follow the instructions on the packet. The biggest problem is that people do not use enough NRT to help with the cravings or they do not use the NRT product for long enough.

There are nine different products of NRT:

- **Patches;** Patches work by releasing a steady dose of nicotine through your skin, are easy to use and are available with a 16 or 24-hour dose delivery. There are three stages in each dose.
- **Gum;** The chewing gum is available in two different strengths, 2mg and 4mg-whichever you use, you must chew regularly throughout the day, remembering to rest it between your gum and cheek to ensure maximum absorption.
- **Inhalator;** this is a plastic holder with nicotine cartridges. You draw on it so the nicotine vapour passes into your blood stream through the lining of your mouth. Available in 10mg and 15mg cartridges.
- **Microtab;** Microtabs are small tablets that are placed under your tongue. As the tablet dissolves, nicotine is absorbed through the lining of your mouth. It should not be chewed, sucked or swallowed as this prevents it from working properly.
- **Lozenge;** The lozenge can be sucked slowly and then left to rest between the gum and cheek where the nicotine will be absorbed. Available in 2mg and 4mg.
- **Mini Lozenge;** the mini lozenge takes about 10 minutes to dissolve; it is available in numerous flavours and both a 1.5mg and 4mg strength.

- **Nasal Spray;** the spray is suitable for those with a heavy nicotine addiction. Nicotine is rapidly absorbed through the blood vessels in the nose to relieve cravings quickly.
- **Oral Film Strips;** Place the 2.5mg strip onto the tongue and allow to dissolve which takes approx 3 minutes.

It is vital that you read the instructions supplied with all nicotine replacement products to ensure that you use your chosen product correctly and gain the full benefit from it.

Other stop smoking products

Non-Nicotine Products

Zyban; This is a non-nicotine stop smoking aid that works by reducing the urge to smoke and is only available on prescription from your GP. This 8 week course comes in tablet form and treatment begins while you are still smoking. You should set a quit date within the second week of taking the tablets-usually around Day 11 and stop smoking completely on that day. By this time, the drug should have built up to the required levels and decreasing your desire to smoke. It's only available on prescription and is not available if you are pregnant.

Champix; Champix is a non-nicotine oral drug that is designed to block the rewards and reduce craving from cigarette smoking thereby helping you to stop smoking. This 12 week course is prescribed by your GP and begins while you are still smoking with a two week starter pack. Before you start the course of treatment you should decide on a date in the second week-usually between day 8 and day 14 when you will stop smoking. It's only available on prescription and is not available if you are pregnant.

It is vital that you read the instructions supplied with all these products to ensure you use your chosen product correctly and gain full benefit from it. Your pharmacist or Stop Smoking Advisor can help you.

Ways to Relax

If you used to smoke to relax, you will need to find some other ways of relaxing. Try to find time for a long lazy bath or try sitting with your feet up in a quiet room.

Close your eyes and consciously relax every muscle in your body, from your toes right up to your scalp. Breathe deeply and listen to your breathing.

Try to do this for about ten minutes every day and especially when you are craving for a cigarette.

What about weight?

Now that you are a non-smoker, you will soon be able to taste your food better. So really enjoy your meals. You do not have to put on much weight if the extra food you eat is fresh fruit and vegetables. You will really enjoy the flavour more than you have done in years.

The money you save by not smoking

Remember that you used to spend a lot of money on smoking. Work out just how much. Now that you are saving money, put it aside to buy something that you want.

Never have the odd cigarette

Never say to yourself that the odd cigarette won't matter. The odd one can lead to another, and another. It is too dangerous.

Further Information

To contact Fag Ends for help to stop smoking

Freephone: 0800 195 2131

**Or contact our Fag Ends Stop Smoking Advisor on
Tel: 0151 706 2332.**

Text phone number: 18001 0151 706 2332

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