

Smoking FAQs

Questions about the Healthy Cornwall stop smoking service	2
At what age can the stop smoking service help someone to stop smoking?	2
They can help anyone from 12 years old	2
Why can't I just try to quit by myself?	2
I don't want you to refer me now – how do I get referred in future though?	2
How long will it take before someone calls me?	2
What does the support offer entail?	2
If I relapse, can I use the service again?	2
Do I have to speak to someone - can't I just get the stuff I need?	2
My (family member) smokes can you give me some medication to help them?	3
I have already stopped smoking; can you help me get off stop smoking medication/vape?	3
Tools to quit.....	4
What is the best way to quit smoking?	4
A lot of the tools to quit smoking seem to still have nicotine in (e.g. patches, gum, vapes etc). Isn't nicotine bad for you though?	4
Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT).....	4
I've tried NRT before and it didn't work for me?	4
Vaping	4
Isn't vaping just as harmful as smoking?	4
But vaping is so similar to smoking, I don't see how it would help you quit?	5
People seem to use vapes more frequently than people that smoke use cigarettes – surely that must be worse?	5
I've heard vapes are unregulated and that all sorts are put in them that aren't safe?	5
But doesn't' vaping cause 'popcorn lung'?	5
Won't exposure to vapes be harmful to those around me?	5
Is vapes aren't harmful, why did I hear they are being banned?	5
How come vapes are being encouraged as a quit smoking aid but children are being told vapes are dangerous?	6
Other medications (Varenicline/Champix, Cytisine, Zyban	6
I've heard there's some sort of quit smoking pill?	6
I used Champix before to quit – is this something I can get now?	6
Worries about quitting.....	7
I've been smoking such a long time, surely there's no point in giving up now?	7
I'm worried about quitting as smoking helps me manage my stress?	7
Last time I quit my mental health really deteriorated so I'm concerned about trying to quit again?	7

I've heard that when people quit smoking they usually put on weight? 7

The last time I quit smoking, my coughing got worse so isn't it better that I keep smoking? 8

Questions about the Healthy Cornwall stop smoking service

At what age can the stop smoking service help someone to stop smoking?

They can help anyone from 12 years old.

Why can't I just try to quit by myself?

Stopping smoking suddenly through willpower alone is the least effective way to quit. Research shows that you are four times more likely to quit smoking with treatment and support from a trained stop smoking advisor, who will help create a treatment plan and offer additional support to help to keep you on track.

Also, a stop smoking advisor can prescribe most items through your GP, meaning you may only have to pay a prescription cost per item (or get it free if eligible). This is much more cost effective than buying stop smoking items over the counter at a chemist.

I don't want you to refer me now – how do I get referred in future though?

A health professional doesn't have to refer you – you can self refer by [contacting Healthy Cornwall](#) who delivers the stop smoking service. Their up to date information can be found on their website. You can self refer by calling, emailing or submitting an enquiry form on their website.

How long will it take before someone calls me?

You should hopefully hear from a stop smoking advisor within 5 working days. However, during busy periods you may wait longer to hear from somebody.

What does the support offer entail?

A trained stop smoking advisor will contact you to arrange an initial consultation to discuss your smoking history, your motivations to quit and treatment options. From this you will agree a treatment plan, and your advisor will order you any stop smoking treatments you need.

Typically, you'll have weekly face-to-face or phone contact with your advisor for the first 4 weeks after you quit smoking, then less frequently for a further 8 weeks, for a total of around 12 weeks of support.

If I relapse, can I use the service again?

Of course - the stop smoking service is not just a one-time only service. Relapses are common and most smokers try quitting a number of times before they are successful in quitting for life. Each quit attempt is a learning experience that hopefully inform each new quit attempt to help increase chances of success.

Do I have to speak to someone - can't I just get the stuff I need?

To access our support, we need to allocate you to a member of our team and they will need to speak to you to develop a treatment plan. Continued contact with your advisor will ensure the best

outcome possible as they will be able to amend treatments if required and support with overcoming barriers to quitting.

My (family member) smokes can you give me some medication to help them?

The family member will need to give consent for us to discuss any help they need before we can discuss further.

I have already stopped smoking; can you help me get off stop smoking medication/vape?

Unfortunately, we are only able to support people to stop smoking tobacco. If you are trying to stop using stop smoking treatments, they would need to speak with their GP.

Tools to quit

What is the best way to quit smoking?

The best treatment for you will depend on your personal preference, your age, whether you're pregnant or breastfeeding and any medical conditions you have.

The local stop smoking service can provide access to nicotine replacement therapy (NRT), stop smoking medications and vapes. Research has shown that all these methods can be effective. Importantly, evidence shows that they are most effective if used alongside support from a stop smoking service.

More information about the different types of treatment can be found [here](#).

A lot of the tools to quit smoking seem to still have nicotine in (e.g. patches, gum, vapes etc). Isn't nicotine bad for you though?

Nicotine is the addictive drug in cigarettes but it is the other substances that cause the most harm.

Nicotine in dosages present in cigarettes does not cause heart attacks, cancer or lung damage. It is the other 7,000 toxins and chemicals in tobacco which are harmful, particularly tar and carbon monoxide. There are 70 known cancer causing agents in tobacco smoke.

Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT)

I've tried NRT before and it didn't work for me?

Sometimes people are unsuccessful with quitting using NRT for a number of reasons, including:

- **Only using a single form of NRT.** Research shows that using a combination of NRT products is more successful than using a single item. Typically a combination of a patch to act as a slow release NRT and an oral NRT product for when cravings arise is recommended.
- **Not using NRT correctly.** It is common for people to not understand how to get the best effect from their nicotine products e.g. chewing nicotine lozenges rather than allowing them to dissolve between your gums and cheek lining.
- **Not staying on NRT for long enough.** Sometimes people come off of NRT too quickly which can lead back to smoking. Depending on the level of cigarettes smoked, a course of NRT treatment should last anywhere between 8-12 weeks to increase chances of long term success.

Getting support from a stop smoking service can ensure that NRT is being used appropriately to the best effect.

Vaping

Isn't vaping just as harmful as smoking?

Cigarettes release thousands of different chemicals when they burn – many are poisonous and up to 70 cause cancer. Most of the harmful chemicals in cigarette smoke, including tar and carbon monoxide, are not contained in vape aerosol.

People who switch completely from smoking to vaping have significantly reduced exposure to toxins associated with risks of cancer, lung disease, heart disease and stroke.

Because of this, experts in the field agree that vaping is significantly less harmful than smoking cigarettes.

It is important to use a UK licensed vape [ECIG Dynamic Search | MHRA](#). Vapes which do not meet the UK requirements, may have additional ingredients which may cause harm.

But vaping is so similar to smoking, I don't see how it would help you quit?

Evidence shows that nicotine vapes are actually more effective than nicotine replacement therapies, like patches or gum.

Some people find vaping helps them because the hand-to-mouth action is like smoking, plus you get similar sensations, like "throat hit".

It's important to choose an e-liquid with enough nicotine to reduce withdrawal symptoms and urges to smoke. A specialist vape shop or your local Stop Smoking Service can advise you.

People seem to use vapes more frequently than people that smoke use cigarettes – surely that must be worse?

Each puff on a vape carries a small fraction of the risks of a puff on a cigarette.

Vaping is different from smoking in the way it delivers nicotine to the brain. With smoking, you get a very quick hit in the short time it takes to smoke a cigarette. With vaping, generally it takes longer for nicotine to reach the brain and you need to "sip" on your vape more frequently.

I've heard vapes are unregulated and that all sorts are put in them that aren't safe?

All products for sale must be notified to the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) with detailed information including listing of all ingredients.

Always buy your vaping products from a reputable supplier like a specialist vape shop, pharmacy, supermarket or a UK-based online retailer so they are covered by UK safety and quality regulations.

But doesn't' vaping cause 'popcorn lung'?

Vaping does not cause "popcorn lung", the common name for a rare disease called bronchiolitis obliterans.

The disease was found in a group of factory workers exposed to a chemical (diacetyl) used to flavour popcorn.

Diacetyl is contained in cigarette smoke, but it is banned as an ingredient in UK-regulated nicotine vapes and e-liquids.

Won't exposure to vapes be harmful to those around me?

There is no evidence so far that vaping is harmful to people around you.

While secondhand smoke from cigarettes causes serious harm to others, there is no evidence so far that vaping is harmful to people around you, and any risks are likely to be very low.

But as a precaution, it is best not to vape around babies and children if you can avoid it. Young children often copy what adults do.

Always be considerate when vaping around anyone else, especially people with health conditions like asthma who might be more sensitive to vape aerosol.

Is vapes aren't harmful, why did I hear they are being banned?

Not all vapes are being banned, just disposable vapes.

Single-use vapes are not rechargeable or refillable and are typically discarded as general waste in a bin or littered, rather than recycled – contributing to a flood of litter on our streets.

Also, disposable vapes have been a key driver behind the alarming rise in youth vaping, with the proportion of 11- to 17-year-old vapers using disposables increasing almost ninefold in the last 2 years. By banning disposable vapes, it is hoped that less young people will begin vaping.

How come vapes are being encouraged as a quit smoking aid but children are being told vapes are dangerous?

Vaping is substantially less harmful than smoking which is why adults addicted to cigarettes are encouraged to use this as an option to quit smoking. However, vaping is not something for non-smokers, especially children and young people to try. The developing lungs and brains of young people and children mean they are more sensitive to its effects.

Other medications (Varenicline/Champix, Cytisine, Zyban

I've heard there's some sort of quit smoking pill?

There are a number of medications that can be used for quitting smoking. The one that has been most recently publicized in the news though is Varenicline.

Research has found that Varenicline has been shown to work as well as vapes to help people stop smoking and be a more effective aid than nicotine-replacement gum or patches.

The drug works by reducing cravings for nicotine and blocking its effect on the brain, while also helping with withdrawal symptoms such as feeling irritable or having difficulty sleeping.

When used alongside behavioural support, such as counselling, the treatment has been shown to help around one in four people to stop smoking for at least six months.

Other pill type medications are available for quitting smoking – the local stop smoking service can discuss these options in detail with someone wanting to quit smoking.

I used Champix before to quit – is this something I can get now?

The brand Champix is not currently available in the UK or Europe. It was withdrawn in October 2021 as a precaution, because of an impurity found in the medicine.

However, a generic version of the pill, Varenicline, is now available and works in the same way the Champix did.

Worries about quitting

I've been smoking such a long time, surely there's no point in giving up now?

It's never too late to stop smoking. The evidence suggests people lose, on average, around 20 minutes of life for each cigarette they smoke. The sooner a person stops smoking, the longer they live. However, quitting at any age substantially improves health and the benefits start almost immediately.

Here's a timeline of some of the benefits to quitting smoking:

- **After 20 minutes:** Check your pulse rate, it will already be starting to return to normal.
- **After 8 hours:** Your oxygen levels are recovering, and the harmful carbon monoxide level in your blood will have reduced by half.
- **After 48 hours:** Your carbon monoxide levels have dropped to that of a non-smoker. Your lungs are clearing out mucus and your senses of taste and smell are improving.
- **After 72 hours:** If you notice that breathing feels easier, it's because your bronchial tubes have started to relax. Also your energy will be increasing.
- **After 2 to 12 weeks:** Blood will be pumping through to your heart and muscles much better because your circulation will have improved.
- **After 3 to 9 months:** Any coughs, wheezing or breathing problems will be improving as your lung function increases by up to 10%.
- **After 1 year:** Great news! Your risk of heart attack will have halved compared with a smoker's.
- **After 10 years:** More great news! Your risk of death from lung cancer will have halved compared with a smoker's.

I'm worried about quitting as smoking helps me manage my stress?

Research has shown that smoking actually increases anxiety and tension. Nicotine creates an immediate sense of relaxation, so people smoke in the belief it reduces stress and anxiety. This feeling is temporary and soon gives way to withdrawal symptoms and increased cravings. Smoking reduces withdrawal symptoms but doesn't reduce anxiety or deal with the reasons someone may feel that way.

Last time I quit my mental health really deteriorated so I'm concerned about trying to quit again?

Nicotine withdrawal from quitting smoking can often lead to worsening in mental health, though usually this is a short term side effect as the body adjusts to the lack of nicotine. Using stop smoking aids such as NRT and vapes can help reduce these side effects by providing a source of nicotine.

I've heard that when people quit smoking they usually put on weight?

It's normal to have concerns about gaining weight when giving up smoking. Some people do put on weight after they stop. This is down to nicotine suppressing your body's natural appetite and making it burn calories faster. Also, when you stop smoking, your appetite and ability to taste and smell will improve, so you may enjoy your food more.

If you quit smoking and replace it with unhealthy snacking then you're likely to put on a bit of weight. However, if you stop and keep to a healthy diet it's unlikely that you'll gain weight because you've stopped smoking.

The stop smoking team at Healthy Cornwall can support you through this period with advice and information, and even signpost you on to some of their healthy weight services if needed.

The last time I quit smoking, my coughing got worse so isn't it better that I keep smoking?

It can be quite common for a cough to worsen after giving up smoking.

Tobacco smoke paralyzes and destroys some of the tiny hair-like structures in the airways called cilia. As a result, the cilia that remain have trouble sweeping mucus out of the lungs.

When you stop smoking, the cilia regrow and become active again.

As they recover and help move the mucus out of your lungs, you might cough more than usual. This might last for a few weeks or up to a year. But the cough often goes away on its own.