

# SMOKING AND COPD

(chronic obstructive pulmonary disease)

Harrow **NHS**  
Primary Care Trust

This fact sheet is for smokers with COPD explains why it is important for you to stop now and describes effective help that is available on the NHS.

## Why stop smoking?

Smoking is by far the most important cause of COPD. In COPD your airways become damaged and you become short of breath. It develops so slowly that most people do not notice the problem until a lot of damage has been done.

It is vital to stop smoking as soon as the diagnosis is made. As soon as you stop, your condition will stop getting worse. But the longer you leave it the more damage is done to your lungs.

Once the disease has taken hold, stopping smoking will reduce the number of attacks of breathlessness. There is no other treatment that can have the effect that stopping smoking has on progression of this disease.

## Why get help with stopping?

Stopping smoking can be very difficult. This is because of the way that nicotine acts on the brain: it rewards you when you smoke and produces unpleasant symptoms when you try to stop.

If you try to stop without help, your chances of success are about 1 in 20.

## What help is available?

### 1. Attend an NHS 'Specialist Smokers Clinic'.

You visit the clinic once a week starting one or two weeks before the target quit date and then for four weeks afterwards. Sessions last 60 minutes. They focus on practical ways of avoiding slipping back to smoking. Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT) is usually prescribed (maybe subject to a one off prescription charge).

This treatment boosts your chances of success by 300%.

### 2. Consult Your Local Participating Pharmacist

Community pharmacists are trained to support smokers wanting to stop. You see the pharmacist once a week, starting one or two weeks before the quit date and carry on for four weeks after it. Sessions typically last 15-20 minutes. NRT is usually prescribed (maybe subject to a one off prescription charge).

This treatment can boost your chances of success by 200%.

### 3. Discuss with your GP getting NRT or Zyban or buy NRT yourself from a pharmacy.

You will not get the full benefit of the support that the other two options can provide but if you use the medication as directed and continue to use it for long enough:

It can boost your chances of success by 100%.

**Your best chance of success is with the Specialist Smokers Clinic**

Getting help from the Harrow NHS Stop Smoking Service is easy. Just call 020 8966 1008, or ask your GP.

**Make the call - it could save your life!**



## What you should know when trying to stop

You may get a cough just after you have stopped. This is normal and does not last long.

Smokers often think that smoking helps with stress but it actually makes it worse - your stress levels will go down if you stop smoking completely.

It can help if you make your home completely smoke free.

