

## Quitting smoking

Giving up smoking is the single most important thing you can do to avoid future heart problems.

### How to quit

It is important to stop completely. Cutting down is less likely to work than stopping altogether. We can help you on the MyAction programme by offering you medications that will help you to quit successfully and lots of support.

### Stopping smoking on the MyAction programme

- ✓ Be positive.
- ✓ Write down your most important reasons for quitting and remember them so you can return to them when you need extra encouragement.
- ✓ Tell your friends and family that you are planning to quit. If your partner smokes, ask them if they want to join you in trying to stop smoking while you are both on the MyAction programme.
- ✓ Join a stop smoking group on the MyAction programme.
- ✓ Ask your doctor, or your MyAction nurse about varenicline and nicotine therapy. They can improve your chances of successfully quitting by helping you to cope with withdrawal symptoms.
- ✓ Keep busy. Boredom can make you smoke. Take up a new hobby like cycling or playing the piano.
- ✓ Set a quit date with the MyAction nurse. If you choose varenicline, you will start taking it a week or two before this date. Ask the MyAction nurse for more information about varenicline and nicotine therapy.
- ✓ Keep active. Try to do some activity every day. Exercise can increase your chance of successfully quitting, help you to cope with withdrawal symptoms and boost your self confidence.
- ✓ Save the money that you would have spent on cigarettes and reward yourself.
- ✓ If you have a weak moment or are feeling blue, call a friend, the MyAction nurse or someone you know who can give you support.
- ✓ Don't give up on giving up!

Please turn over.

### What difference will it make to my life?

- You will notice that your body starts to recover quite quickly.
- Take the stair test over the weeks that follow your quit attempt– ask your MyAction nurse.
- Notice your senses re-awakening (particularly smell and taste) and how much more you will enjoy good food as a result.

### Putting on weight when you stop smoking

Be careful! You may be tempted to snack when you give up smoking. Choose healthy low fat and low sugar snacks like raw carrots, cucumber, celery or tomatoes, and be active. If you feel you need to lose weight, it's best to cope with stopping smoking first. Remember, stopping smoking is the single most important change you can make to improve your health.

### Quit smoking together!

You don't have to quit smoking on your own! If your partner or another member of your family smokes, why not get them to quit with you? You can:

- Support each other to make it easier to quit
- Do it together on the MyAction programme
- Come along to group sessions – it will help to keep you motivated
- Praise yourselves for quitting – reward yourselves with a celebratory meal, you deserve it!

### Target

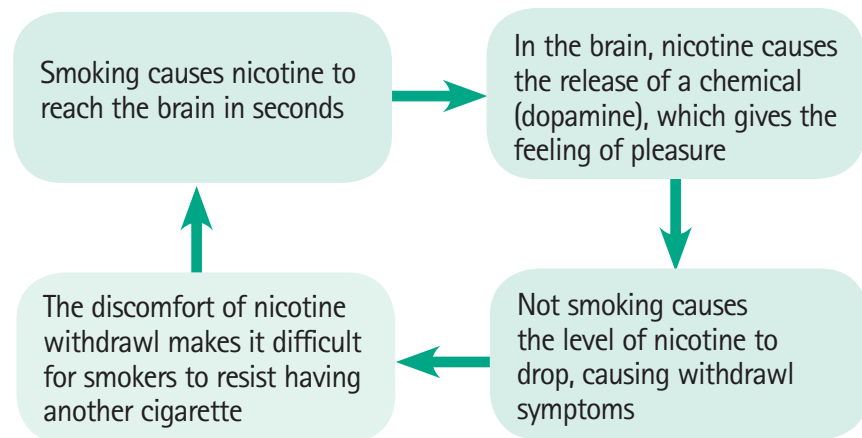
No smoking



## Why is it so hard to stop smoking?

Nicotine is an extremely addictive substance. It's also a habit which is very difficult to give up.

### The smoking addiction cycle



So when you try to give up, you experience unpleasant withdrawal symptoms like:

- Irritability
- Restlessness
- Craving for nicotine
- Disrupted sleep/waking at night
- Light-headedness
- Inability to concentrate
- Increased appetite
- Depression

Some of these symptoms may go on for a few weeks, but the good news is that they can be managed if you use medication like varenicline or nicotine therapy to help you quit. So they need not stop you from making a successful quit attempt.

## What if I feel like a cigarette?

It's normal to have times when you want a cigarette when you are trying to stop. If you are really committed and believe in yourself, you can succeed. Remember you will get lots of support on the MyAction programme to help you quit, and the medication will make it easier. Plan ahead so that you are prepared for situations when you may get caught out.

- Remind yourself of your main reasons for quitting
- Watch out for those triggers – the situations where you used to smoke. If you feel a sudden urge for a cigarette, do something else instead. Go out for a walk, wait for 3 minutes and think again, call up a friend
- A 'slip-up' does not mean you have failed! You can get on track again
- Avoid alcohol when you are in the early stages of a quit smoking attempt
- Remember – not a puff!

## What are the benefits of stopping?

### Your health

- Oxygen levels return to normal within 8 hours
- Carbon monoxide will be eliminated from your body within 24 hours
- Your taste and smell will improve within 48 hours
- You will breathe more easily within 72 hours
- Your skin will improve and you will have less wrinkles within one month
- You will cough and wheeze less within 3–9 months
- Your risk of a heart attack will be reduced by half compared to that of a smoker within one year
- Your risk of a heart attack will fall to the same as someone who has never smoked within 15 years

*Please turn over.*