



**Wolverhampton
Diabetes Care**

Smoking and Diabetes

Smoking is one of the major avoidable causes of ill health and premature death through circulation, breathing and cancer disease.

How does smoking affect your diabetes?

People with diabetes are already at greater risk of the major circulation problems that lead to a heart attack, stroke and gangrene. The risk is about three times as much as those who don't have diabetes.

Diabetes and smoking interact by affecting the lining of these blood vessels so that they clog up and clot off to produce even more risk of circulation disease, increasing the risk again about 3 times. That means that if you have diabetes and you smoke the overall risk is increased (3 x 3) 9 fold – that's 900% more - compared to people who don't have diabetes and don't smoke.

Smoking may also worsen the other diabetes complications by affecting the smaller blood vessels in the eyes, kidney and nerves.

Why should I stop smoking?

You must make your own choices but you must already know that there are many reasons to do this. Stopping smoking is the most important thing you can do to reduce the risk of circulation complications, let alone the other risks to your health with chest disease and cancer. No matter how long you have smoked, your health will improve after you quit.

Why quitting is so hard.

People keep smoking for two reasons. First, nicotine is highly addictive. Often a person who quits goes through a withdrawal. Withdrawal is usually worst on the second day of quitting, and it gradually fades with time. Second, many people become psychologically tied to smoking. It is their daily ritual.

How to stop smoking?

It is important that you stop smoking because you want to. Think of good reasons to stop like to improve your health or to save money. Get support from family and friends; tell everyone that you have decided to stop, avoid places and situations where you will want a cigarette, plan activities to replace smoking. Try to do different things like going for a walk instead of watching TV, or drinking juice instead of coffee. Ask your health visitor or doctor for help. Learn to relax.

Preparing to stop?

This can take anything from a few days to years. Smoking is strongly linked to certain situations e.g. a break for tea or coffee, a phone call or a stressful event can all be cues to light up. The key to success is to try and break the link between these events and your smoking habit. Have a plan of action. Decide on a day to stop; will be easier when you are busy or working or when you are relaxed on a weekend. The day before get rid of cigarettes, ashtrays and lighters. Plan rewards for the end of the first day, the first week and the first month.

Stopping.

There are many ways to quit. Some stop smoking immediately and completely. Others cut down gradually by reducing the number of cigarettes smoked over a period of time.

Nicotine treatment.

One method that helps you quit gradually is nicotine replacement. When you wear a nicotine patch or chew nicotine gum, some amount of the nicotine enters your blood. The patch and the gum let you taper off from the physical addiction slowly. You do not wear a patch for ever instead you use a series of patches with decreasing nicotine doses. After a few weeks you have been weaned totally from nicotine. A smoker who uses a patch is twice as likely to quit successfully as someone who does not use a patch.

Stop Smoking Services.

One effective way of stopping smoking is to use your local NHS stop smoking service. They have trained advisors who can provide free advice and support. Evidence shows that using these services will improve your chances of giving up long term by 13- 19 %. Currently over half of people who set a quit date are still not smoking at the four week follow-up.

Staying stopped.

Think positive and do not waver. Take care and do not allow yourself to be tempted and do not get into difficult situations. Do not play games like the 'one cigarette won't hurt' or 'I'll just have one to prove I have kicked it'. The occasional cigarette will reawaken the craving. Stopping smoking could be the beginning of a new life style. When you have not smoked for a few months and are feeling confident, look at other aspects of your lifestyle like your weight and activity and have a go at improving this too.

Seeking advice and what care to expect

Your medical team will discuss stopping smoking with you and advise about nicotine replacement treatment. You can contact the various NHS services quite easily.