



**Gloucestershire Hospitals**  
NHS Foundation Trust

# **Smoking and Pregnancy**



Congratulations on your pregnancy. Becoming smoke-free is the best thing you can do for yourself and your baby.

## **Why is it important to stop smoking in pregnancy?**

Smoking during pregnancy exposes your baby to harmful chemicals such as carbon monoxide and tar. These chemicals reduce the amount of oxygen and nutrients your baby receives, which can affect their growth and development.

## **Risks of smoking in pregnancy**

<b>Health effect</b>	<b>How smoking while pregnant can affect your baby</b>	<b>How second-hand smoke while pregnant can affect your baby</b>
Low birth weight (<2500g)	Double the likelihood	Increased risk
Stillbirth	Double the likelihood	Increased risk
Miscarriage	24 to 32% more likely	Possible increase
Preterm birth	27% more likely	Increased risk

Heart defects	50% more likely	Increased risk
Sudden Infant Death	2 to 3 times the risk	Increased risk
Neonatal death and admissions	Increased risk	Increased risk
Behavioural and learning problems	Increased risk	Increased risk
Respiratory problems	Increased risk	Increased risk

Source: The National Centre for Smoking Cessation and Training (NCSCCT)

## **Risks of second-hand smoke (passive smoking)**

Breathing in other people's cigarette smoke, which is known as second-hand smoke, can be just as harmful to your baby.

Children who live in a household where at least one person smokes are more likely to develop:

- asthma
- chest infections (pneumonia and bronchitis)
- meningitis
- ear infections
- coughs and colds

## **To protect your baby:**

- Ask others not to smoke around you, in your home, or in your car.
- Encourage your partner or other family members to quit smoking too. Your Midwife or Health Visitor can refer your partner or family member to our in-house Maternity Specialist Tobacco Dependency Team or to Healthy Lifestyles Gloucestershire for support.

Women who live with someone who smokes are six times more likely to smoke themselves during their pregnancy, or to start smoking again after giving birth. Stopping together gives you both the best chance of success and protects your baby from second-hand smoke.

## **Benefits of stopping for you and your baby**

- Your baby will get more oxygen and nutrients to grow healthily.
- Your risk of complications in pregnancy and birth is reduced.
- You will have more energy, breathe more easily, and feel fitter.
- You will save money.
- You will give your baby the best possible start in life.

Stopping smoking as early as possible in pregnancy will have a significant benefit. The image below shows what happens to your body when you stop smoking.

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

Source: [www.nhs.uk/better-health/quit-smoking](http://www.nhs.uk/better-health/quit-smoking)

## What help is available?

- Your midwife will check your Carbon Monoxide (CO) levels using a breath test and discuss options to help you quit safely.
- Your midwife will refer you to our in-house Specialist Tobacco Dependency Team if you live in Gloucester City. Residents living outside of Gloucester City will be referred to our local stop smoking service, Healthy Lifestyles.
- The specialist team will help you to set a quit-date and arrange appointments suited to you and your

needs, offering flexible support at a time and place that works best for you.

- They can provide nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) such as patches, gum, or lozenges.
- You may also be eligible to join the National Smoke Free Pregnancy Incentive Scheme, which offers Love2Shop® vouchers worth up to £400 in total, given in stages for staying smoke-free during pregnancy and postnatally.
- Support continues into the postnatal period to help you stay smoke-free once your baby has arrived.
- Partners and family members who smoke can also be referred for help to quit.

Research shows that you are twice as likely to stop smoking if you use nicotine replacement therapy (NRT), and those who use two forms of NRT together (for example, a patch and a fast-acting product like gum or lozenges) are even more likely to quit successfully.

## **Vaping in pregnancy**

Some people use e-cigarettes (vapes) to help them stop smoking.

An e-cigarette is an electronic device that lets you breathe in nicotine as a vapour instead of smoke. Unlike normal cigarettes, which burn tobacco, e-cigarettes heat a liquid. This liquid usually contains nicotine and flavouring.

E-cigarettes do not contain tobacco and do not produce carbon monoxide or tar. These are two of the most harmful substances in cigarette smoke.

If using an e-cigarette helps you stop smoking completely and stay smoke-free, it is much safer for you and your baby than continuing to smoke. However, e-cigarettes are not completely risk-free, and we still do not have much evidence about how safe they are during pregnancy.

Licensed nicotine replacement products (like patches, gum or lozenges) are still the recommended first choice for stopping smoking in pregnancy.

## **Tips for success**

- Set a quit date and tell family and friends for support.
- Get support from a fully trained Tobacco Dependency Advisor.
- Use nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) to manage cravings.
- Reward yourself for every smoke-free day or week.

Quitting smoking is one of the best things you can do for your baby. Your midwife and local support services are here to help you every step of the way, through pregnancy and into early parenthood.

## **Further information**

For further information speak to your midwife or visit the following websites:

### **Healthy Lifestyles:**

Website: [www.hlsglos.org/pregnancy-and-postnatal/pregnancy-stopping-smoking](http://www.hlsglos.org/pregnancy-and-postnatal/pregnancy-stopping-smoking)

### **NHS:**

Website: [www.nhs.uk/smokefree](http://www.nhs.uk/smokefree)

### **Tommy's – The pregnancy and baby charity:**

Website: [www.tommys.org/pregnancy-information/im-pregnant/being-healthy/smoking](http://www.tommys.org/pregnancy-information/im-pregnant/being-healthy/smoking)

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## Shared Decision Making

If you are asked to make a choice, you may have lots of questions that you want to ask. You may also want to talk over your options with your family or friends. It can help to write a list of the questions you want answered and take it to your appointment.

### Ask 3 Questions

To begin with, try to make sure you get the answers to three key questions if you asked to make a choice about your healthcare.

1. What are my options?
2. What are the pros and cons of each option for me?
3. How do I get support to help me make a decision that is right for me?



These resources have been adapted with kind permission from the MAGIC Programme, supported by the Health Foundation.

**\*Ask 3 Questions** is based on Shepherd HL, et al. Three questions that patients can ask to improve the quality of information physicians give about treatment options: A cross-over trial. Patient Education and Counselling, 2011;84: 379-85



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