



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

S is for smoking and pregnancy

Information for
pregnant women,
partners and
families



**It's never too late to benefit from giving up smoking.
This leaflet can help you make an informed decision.**

Q is for questions and answers

“What’s wrong with smoking?”

Smoking during pregnancy has been linked to:

Poor health for the mother

- Miscarriage
- Bleeding
- Nausea.

Poor health for the baby

- Slow growth of the fetus
- Premature birth
- Low birth weight
- Breathing problems and wheezing in the first six months of life.

If you stop smoking during pregnancy you will benefit from

- less morning sickness
- fewer complications
- a more content baby after birth
- it will reduce the risk of stillbirth and cot death.

“How does smoking affect unborn babies?”

When you inhale smoke you put more than 4000 chemicals, tar, and carbon monoxide, a poisonous gas, into your body. Carbon monoxide gets into your blood stream and reduces the oxygen reaching your baby. Babies who don't get enough oxygen can be born smaller and weaker. Oxygen helps babies grow.

“I'm already pregnant – isn't the damage done?”

Smoking is harmful throughout your pregnancy. The good news is that when you stop smoking, your baby benefits immediately. When your lungs become smoke-free, the carbon monoxide and chemicals clear from your body and your oxygen levels return to normal.

“What if my husband, partner, family or friends smoke?”

If anyone smokes near you, you become a passive smoker. Passive smoking is dangerous because you and your baby inhale harmful gases and chemicals. After birth, babies who live in a smoky environment are passive smokers and have a higher risk of cot death.



“What can I do to help?”

Protecting babies from tobacco smoke during pregnancy and in childhood really helps them get a healthier start in life. If you or your partner smoke, try to use this time to stop. You will all benefit. You will have more money to spend on the baby, be generally fitter and have improved health.

“Can my partner and friends help?”

Yes, your partner, family and friends can all help. Ideally they could try to stop with you. If they can't, they can help by not offering you cigarettes or smoking near you.

Stopping smoking during pregnancy

If you gave up before you became pregnant, congratulations! Most women stop smoking during pregnancy and many stay stopped forever.



T is for tips for stopping smoking

- **Ask yourself – ‘Why do I smoke?’ Write out your reasons**

Many women think cigarettes help them relax. In fact, they don't. What cigarettes do is calm the nicotine cravings. Nicotine withdrawal makes you feel tense. Think about the times when you've rushed for a cigarette. Stopping will free you from this extra pressure.

- **How determined are you? Write down why you'd like to give up**

Your pregnancy is a good reason, but think of ones for yourself, such as more money for basics and treats.

- **Call the free Smokers' Helpline Wales 0800 169 0 169**

This is a confidential support service. A specially trained person will answer your call. They listen to your needs, suggest different ways of giving up smoking and send you a free info pack. Ask them to tell you about your local Stop Smoking Service.

- **Plan ahead**

Before you stop, decide how you're going to handle the first few days. Keeping a diary helps you to see your smoking habit more clearly. Use the diary to work out how to change your routine to avoid tempting situations.

- **Anticipate problems ahead of time**

Work out which times or situations may be difficult at first. Plan to do something else instead of smoking. By thinking ahead and asking people to help you, it'll be easier.

- **Be confident**

Remember why you want to be smoke-free. Concentrate on the rewards you'll get and plan some treats for yourself. Next, set your quit date and ask someone to support you. Stopping smoking doubles your chances of living a longer, healthier life. You can do it!



P is for problems

“I am worried about putting on extra weight if I stop smoking”

You can avoid putting on excess weight if you:

- eat well, but don't have lots more food than normal,
- grill or boil your food, instead of frying,
- eat fewer fatty/sugary foods and more fruit and vegetables,
- try low calorie snacks if you want something between meals,
- increase the amount of physical activity you do.

“Some of my family smoke. What can I do about the risk of passive smoking?”

Ideally babies and children should-always be in a smoke-free atmosphere. If someone wants to smoke in your home, ask them if they'd mind going outside. If this isn't possible, try keeping one, well-ventilated room for smokers well away from your baby. This can help reduce your baby's exposure to-smoke.

Keeping children and babies away from smoke will help prevent:

- coughs, colds and chest infections
- asthma attacks
- meningitis
- ear infections.

“I started smoking again after my last pregnancy I want to stay stopped this time”

If you stopped smoking during your pregnancy you've proved to yourself that you can actually do it. Remember how you felt while you were smoke-free. You know you can give up and you can stay stopped this time. If you feel tempted to start again, remind yourself why you stopped. For tips, call **Smokers' Helpline Wales on 0800 169 0 169.**

N is for nicotine replacement therapy

“I’ve heard of people using ‘gum’ to help them stop smoking. What is it?”

This is a gum which contains nicotine, one of a range of nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) products. NRT helps people to give up smoking by reducing their withdrawal symptoms. People use NRT to help them concentrate on breaking the habit of smoking without going through the ‘cravings’. NRT is not a magic cure, but you are twice as likely to succeed in stopping when using it.

“Can I use NRT when I am pregnant?”

If you have found that you cannot give up smoking during your pregnancy you might consider using NRT to help, if your doctor agrees. It is important to weigh up the risks to you and the baby of continuing to smoke and the benefits of using NRT. Taking a short course of NRT is safer than smoking, because unlike cigarettes NRT doesn’t contain tar, carbon monoxide and other poisons or cause cancer.

If you are finding giving up difficult, ask your GP or pharmacist about using NRT.

If you have tried to stop before and found “cravings” made it hard to stay stopped, speak to your doctor or pharmacist about your smoking history, your pregnancy and using NRT.

“Where do you get NRT from?”

NRT can be bought from shops and chemists, or supplied by your pharmacist or doctor on prescription.

F is for further information

“Who can I ask for help to stop smoking?”

Your doctor, midwife, practice nurse, health visitor or pharmacist can offer you advice on giving up smoking.

For information, help and advice on stopping smoking during pregnancy you can also call the

Smokers' Helpline Wales

0800 169 0 169

Ask them for details of your local Stop Smoking Service and the special help available for pregnant women.

You can also contact your local Stop Smoking Service on 0800 085 2219 for free and friendly advice and support to help you quit.



Smokers' Helpline Wales

0800 169 0 169



All Wales Smoking Cessation Service

0800 085 2219



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