

# Pregnant & want to quit smoking?



East Kent  
Hospitals University  
NHS Foundation Trust

Quitting smoking is one of the best things you can do to increase your chance of having a healthy baby and safe delivery. Stopping at any point in your pregnancy is beneficial as your baby will start to feel the rewards straight away. We know this can be hard but there is plenty of free help available. **You can do this!**

## What are the benefits of quitting smoking during pregnancy?



### Your baby will get the oxygen and nutrients they need to grow and develop

Did you know that every cigarette contains over 4,000 chemicals? In pregnancy these chemicals reduce the amount of oxygen and nutrients getting to your baby. When you stop smoking, the chemicals from tobacco smoke start to leave your body immediately, so your baby gets the oxygen and nutrients needed to grow and develop.



### Your chance of having a full-term, healthy baby will increase

Quitting reduces your chance of having a miscarriage and greatly reduces the risk of having a baby born too early, underweight or stillborn.



### You will reduce future health risks to your baby

Stopping smoking will also help to protect your baby's future health by reducing the risk of respiratory problems, ear infections and asthma.



### Your health will improve

Smokers die, on average, ten years younger than non-smokers. When you quit you'll have more energy to keep up with your child after they're born - and remain healthy to support them as they grow up.

## How does second-hand smoke affect my baby?



Children exposed to other people's tobacco smoke as they grow up are at increased risk of asthma, ear infections, meningitis and cot death. Quitting when your baby is on the way means you and your partner are doing your upmost to protect their future health.

**Call 0300 123 1220** or speak to your midwife

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## TOP MYTHS ABOUT SMOKING IN PREGNANCY

01

### **Myth: Cutting down on the number of cigarettes I smoke while pregnant is a way to protect my baby**

There is no safe level of smoking during pregnancy. Your brain and body are used to getting regular doses of nicotine. When you cut down, without realising it, you'll try to get the same amount of nicotine from fewer cigarettes. Most people end up taking more puffs, inhale deeper and longer, and smoke more of the cigarette. Often you think you're smoking less but, in fact, you're still getting similar levels of tar and carbon monoxide.

The only way to reduce the risk of health problems for you and your baby is to stop smoking completely.

02

### **Myth: I can't use e-cigarettes during pregnancy**

Many smokers find e-cigarettes help them quit and they only carry a fraction of the risk of smoking. Licensed nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) products such as patches and lozenges are the recommended option in pregnancy but it is fine to use an e-cigarette if it helps you to quit and stay smokefree, and it is much safer for you and your baby than continuing to smoke.

03

### **Myth: Being around second-hand smoke isn't as bad as mum smoking during pregnancy**

Being exposed to other people's tobacco smoke (second-hand smoke) carries the same risks to your baby as mum smoking. A 100% smoke free environment is recommended for all women during pregnancy.

04

### **Myth: Smoking will make me feel less stressed**

Many people believe that smoking helps to reduce stress but it doesn't! This is a myth that people believe because smoking relieves nicotine withdrawal symptoms like irritability and low mood - tricking you into believing it helps with stress.

It is however proven that people who stop smoking have less anxiety, depression, and stress, plus improved mood, than those who continue to smoke! By quitting now you can relax and enjoy your pregnancy.

05

### **Myth: I smoked whilst pregnant with my last baby and they're fine, so this baby will be healthy too**

Each baby and pregnancy are different. Due to the huge number of chemicals in each cigarette, and the widely researched impacts, there will always be risks. The only real way to ensure your baby is protected is to quit smoking altogether.

06

### **Myth: I'm quite far into my pregnancy so there's no benefit to quitting now**

Quitting smoking as early as possible in pregnancy is best but stopping at any time has benefits. From the day you stop smoking your baby will get more oxygen and nutrients to help their development inside the womb. Bringing your baby into a smoke-free home will also help reduce their risk of cot death, allergies and respiratory problems later in life.

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## Options to help you quit smoking during pregnancy

Quitting smoking is one of the best things you can do to increase your chance of having a healthy baby and safe delivery. And you don't have to go it alone - there's lots of free support and tools available to increase your chance of success. Here are some of your options.

### Face-to-face support



Pregnant women who get support are far more likely to stop smoking for good than those who try to quit on their own.

Speak to your midwife, GP or pharmacist for help, or get in touch with your local Stop Smoking Service. You can search for your local Stop Smoking Service at:

[www.stopsmokinglondon.com/support](http://www.stopsmokinglondon.com/support)

### Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT)



Licensed NRT products such as patches and lozenges are the recommended option in pregnancy. NRT provides clean, safe, nicotine, without the other chemicals in cigarette smoke.

NRT is free from your local stop smoking service or doctor whilst you're pregnant and there are a variety of different products available. If you're suffering with morning sickness the gum or lozenge may be hard to tolerate, so you may be better with using an inhalator or mouthspray instead alongside a patch.

Before using any NRT speak to your midwife, GP, a pharmacist or a specialist stop smoking adviser to make sure you get the right one for you.

### E-cigarettes



Many smokers find e-cigarettes beneficial and they only carry a fraction of the risk of smoking.

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quit and stay smoke-free, and it's much safer for you and your baby than continuing to smoke.

### Stop Smoking London Helpline support



Our team of telephone advisors are professionally trained to help you quit smoking. They are qualified to support pregnant women and will work with you to understand your specific

needs and circumstances.

You can call to get information about the free services in your area or even sign up for a 28-day quit programme over the phone which will help you stay motivated. **Call 0300 123 1220.**

**If you're in a relationship with someone who smokes too you're much more likely to quit if they do too. Speak to your partner and support each other by quitting together.**

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