

Stoptober: Make October the Month You Stop Smoking

This Stoptober, why not make October the month you take the first step towards a smoke-free life?

If you smoke, stopping is one of the best things you can do for your health — whatever your age and however long you have smoked. The good news is that you don't have to do it alone, and you don't have to rely on willpower alone.

Stoptober encourages people across the country to stop smoking during October. The aim is to reach **28 days smoke-free** — and if you manage 28 days without smoking, you are five times more likely to quit for good.

Why stop smoking?

Stopping smoking has benefits at any age. Your body begins to recover as soon as you stop, and you can start noticing improvements within days and weeks.

You may find that:

- Your sense of taste and smell improves.
- You breathe more easily.
- You have more energy.
- Your circulation improves.
- Your lung function improves.
- Coughing and wheezing can reduce.
- You reduce your risk of serious illnesses caused by smoking, including heart disease, stroke, lung disease and cancer.

Quitting can also save you money — something that can make a real difference to your household finances.

You don't have to quit using willpower alone

Nicotine is addictive, so stopping smoking can be difficult. Cravings, irritability and difficulty concentrating are common when you first stop.

There are effective treatments and sources of support that can make quitting easier.

Nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) — such as patches, gum, lozenges, inhalers and sprays — provides nicotine without the harmful chemicals found in cigarette smoke. NRT can help manage cravings and withdrawal symptoms.

Some people benefit from using a combination of NRT products, such as a nicotine patch together with a faster-acting product for sudden cravings.

There are also prescription medicines that can help people stop smoking. Your GP, pharmacist or local Stop Smoking Service can help you decide which option is most appropriate for you.

What about vaping?

For adult smokers, nicotine vaping can be an effective way to stop smoking. Vaping is thought to be less harmful than smoking, although it is not completely risk-free.

If you use vaping to help you quit, the important thing is to **stop smoking completely** rather than continuing to smoke and vape. Once you are confident that you will not return to smoking, you can consider gradually reducing your nicotine intake and eventually stopping vaping too.

Vaping is not recommended for children or non-smokers.

A few tips for your Stoptober quit attempt

Pick a quit date

Choose a date in October when you will stop smoking completely. Tell friends, family and colleagues so they can support you.

Identify your triggers

Think about when you are most likely to smoke — perhaps with a cup of coffee, after a meal, when you're stressed or when you're socialising.

Planning what you will do instead can make cravings easier to manage.

Have something ready for cravings

A craving can feel strong, but it will pass. Try going for a short walk, drinking water, chewing gum, keeping your hands busy or distracting yourself with another activity.

Get support

Stopping smoking is easier when you have the right support. NHS Stop Smoking Services provide advice and support and can help you choose the right stop-smoking treatment.

Getting professional support can significantly improve your chances of quitting successfully.

Don't be discouraged if you've tried before

If you've tried to stop smoking in the past and started again, don't see this as failure. Many people need more than one attempt before they quit for good.

Think about what made you return to smoking and what you could do differently this time. Every attempt can teach you something that helps with the next one.

Make this Stoptober your starting point

You don't need to wait for the perfect time to stop smoking. **October could be the month you make a change.**

If you smoke, speak to a member of the practice team, your pharmacist or your local Stop Smoking Service about the support available to you.

Good luck with your Stoptober journey — every cigarette you don't smoke is a step towards better health.

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