

smoking CESSATION

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On July 1st, the smoking ban comes into force in the last remaining area of the UK, England. If you've decided this is the time to give up, here are a number of options to help you.

There is no right or wrong way to give up smoking. Each person is unique and therefore will respond differently to the range of methods available. However, one vital factor that is necessary to succeed is your determination to quit. If you really enjoy smoking despite being aware of the health risks to yourself and others, then your chances of giving up are much reduced. So, before embarking on any smoking cessation programme, try making a list of the advantages and disadvantages of continuing with your habit. Hopefully, the disadvantages will outweigh the advantages and they will help you to focus on why you should give up. If you need convincing, visit www.ash.org.uk. The number of smoking cessation programmes or products now available can be bewildering. Here is a brief description of just some of the available options.

'Cold Turkey'

Some people decide that the only way they can give up smoking is to stop altogether without any help. This can be quite a difficult time and if you choose this method, it is important to have the support of those around you. The withdrawal symptoms can be quite severe and can last for many days.

NHS Smoking Cessation Clinics

These are available throughout the UK and may be run by your local Primary Care Trust, hospital or GP surgery. They can provide one-to-one counselling or group sessions with other smokers. You will be informed of the range of nicotine replacement treatments (NRT) available such as nicotine patches and nicotine gum. For those who have had difficulty giving up in the past, medication to treat nicotine addiction such as Zyban (bupropion) may be recommended, which your GP will be able to prescribe.

Acupuncture

An alternative medical approach to quitting such as acupuncture (fine needles), works very well for some, especially those who are motivated. It aims to help you cope with the effect of nicotine withdrawal. Choose a registered acupuncturist who specialises in smoking cessation.



Hypnosis

Hypnosis is another complementary medical approach that has been proven to have significant success. Hypnosis deals with the emotional withdrawal from smoking as well as the physical withdrawal. Again, choose a registered therapist who specialises in smoking cessation.

Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT)

EFT is becoming more popular in helping smokers to quit as you are able to learn techniques to use on yourself if you crave a cigarette. It involves tapping on specific acupressure points on the body whilst speaking out positive phrases. EFT therapists are growing in number.

Bio Resonance

This is a relatively unknown method but gaining in popularity. It is non-invasive and works by programming the body to detoxify and eliminate the memory of nicotine. You may experience detox symptoms of a headache, fatigue or a metallic taste for a few days. Check out an experienced Bio Resonance practitioner.

Stop Smoking Products

Nicogel - a gel form of NRT that you rub into your hands, available from chemists. Inner Talk "Stop Smoking" CD - works subliminally by playing in the background, available from Vitalia Health (01628 898366). Stop7 - a 7 day programme that consists of a herbal supplement and mouth spray, available from www.stop7.ch.