

# Stopping Smoking and Oral Health

This fact sheet explains why it is important to stop now and describes effective help that is available on the NHS.

## Why stop smoking?

Smokers lose an average of eight years of life unless they stop. They also suffer from diseases of old age for more of their lives. The earlier you stop, the less the damage but stopping at any age makes a difference.

Smoking is very bad for your oral health. It causes gum disease, tooth loss and mouth and throat cancers.

If you smoke you should check your mouth and tongue carefully for white or red patches or sores that do not heal. These can be important signs of a cancer that is about to develop.

If you act early these patches can often be removed before they turn into cancer.

## Why get help with stopping?

Stopping smoking can be very difficult. This is because of the way that nicotine acts on the brain: it rewards you when you smoke and produces unpleasant symptoms when you try to stop.

If you try to stop without help, your chances of success are about 1 in 20.



## What help is available?

**Camquit Stop Smoking Service can help you stop smoking in a variety of ways:**

### 1. Stop smoking groups

These run for seven weeks, usually in the evening. The session usually lasts for about an hour and a half. The success rate for people who want to stop smoking in a group is very high - up to 80%.

### 2. One-to-one appointments

You can call our freephone number or look at our website for the nearest clinics to you. See details below.

### 3. Consult a 'Community Stop Smoking Advisor'

Community advisors are practice nurses, pharmacists or other health professionals who are trained to support smokers wanting to stop. You see the advisor once a week starting one or two weeks before the quit date, and carry on for four weeks after it. Sessions typically last 15-30 minutes. NRT, Zyban or Champix is usually prescribed.

**Call Camquit** and join the telephone counselling call back service. They will send you an NRT voucher to redeem at your local pharmacist and support you over a six-week period at times that are suitable to you. The call back service is available extended hours from 9:00am to 8:00pm Monday to Friday and from 10:00am to 6:00pm at weekends.



## What you should know when trying to stop

You may get mouth ulcers in the first few weeks after you have stopped. This is normal and nothing to worry about. Your oral health will improve quickly when you stop smoking.

If you smoke and also drink heavily you are particularly high risk of developing throat cancer.

Your best chance of success is by getting help!

Contact your local GP or

CAMQUIT on

0800 018 4304 or

[www.camquit.nhs.uk](http://www.camquit.nhs.uk)

Or text KICKBUTT to

80010