

# The Dangers of Smoking

Millions of people in the United Kingdom are smokers. However, there are lots of benefits to giving up smoking as cigarettes are dangerous to health as well as being very expensive.

## The Cost of Smoking

A person that smokes 20 cigarettes each day will spend nearly £50 every week on cigarettes. During a year, that adds up to more than £2000! How else could this money be spent? Holidays, treats and days out or lots of other exciting ways!

Smoking also costs the country a lot of money. Approximately 83% of the cost of a pack of cigarettes goes to the UK government to help pay for medical care but even this huge amount is not enough to cover the cost of treating the health problems caused by smoking.



## Health Problems Caused by Smoking

Smoking is very harmful to health. The chemicals in cigarettes can cause all types of health problems, ranging from coughs and bronchitis to much more serious illnesses, such as cancer and lung conditions. Over time, smoking gives people breathing difficulties.

### Did You Know...?

These are just some of the chemicals in cigarettes:

- nicotine
- tar
- carbon monoxide
- formaldehyde (used to embalm dead bodies)
- hydrogen cyanide (a deadly poison)
- arsenic (used in rat poison)
- ammonia (used for cleaning windows and toilet bowls)
- polonium (a radioactive element)

Cigarettes contain nicotine, which is very addictive. This is the reason why a lot of people find it difficult to stop smoking. Nicotine affects the brain and causes it to send messages to other areas of the body to make a person feel more relaxed. When this feeling wears off, smokers feel like they need to smoke another cigarette; this is called a 'craving'.

### The Other Effects of Cigarettes

The tar in cigarettes can stain teeth and fingers yellow. The carbon monoxide in cigarettes decreases the amount of oxygen in the blood. This means that the heart has to work harder than normal. The longer a person smokes for, the more likely they are to get a serious illnesses like cancer. Smoking can cause cancer in many areas of the body but it is one of the major causes of lung cancer.

### Stopping Smoking

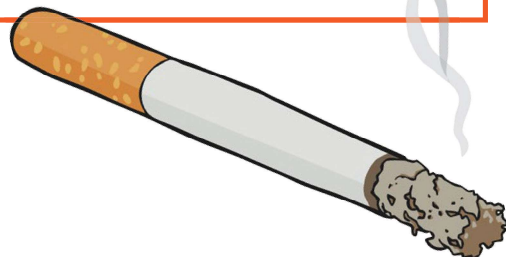
Even though stopping smoking is difficult, there are lots of places to get help. The NHS offers people wanting to quit lots of help and support.

People sometimes use nicotine patches so that they can slowly get used to there being less nicotine in their system. They gradually allow less and less nicotine into the body, which makes it easier to stop.

Within 1 – 9 months of stopping smoking, the lungs start to recover and it is easier for ex-smokers to breathe.

### Statistics

- 1 in 5 adults in the UK are smokers: 20% of men and 17% of women.
- This means there are around 9.6 million adult smokers in the country.
- Smoking rates have halved since 1974 in the UK.



# Questions

1. Why is smoking expensive for the UK government?

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2. How much does smoking cost on an individual?

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3. What percentage of adults in the UK are smokers?

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4. Why do people find it difficult to give up smoking?

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5. How is the brain affected by cigarette smoke?

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6. What is a craving? Explain fully why smokers experience cravings.

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7. Why do you think smoking in the UK has halved since 1974?

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8. What do some people use to help them stop smoking?

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9. Why does the heart have to work harder when someone is smoking?

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