

Facts and figures – Northern Ireland

- One* in four people in Northern Ireland smoke
- 24%* of the population are smokers and 18% of the population are ex-smokers
- 63% of smokers in Great Britain want to give up
- 15% of smokers have their first cigarette within five minutes of waking up

* Figures from Central Survey Unit 2009-2010

Help the UK become a nation of quitters – No Smoking Day 9 March 2011

Today one in five people in the UK smokes – 63% want to quit. No Smoking Day (Wednesday 9 March 2011) aims to help them as with the right NHS support people are four times more likely to succeed in quitting. On Wednesday 9 March events will be held across the UK organised by a variety of health professionals and stop smoking services to reach smokers who wish to quit. No Smoking Day will also continue to run its website for quitters www.wequit.co.uk, an online hub where people can find out about help available, get tips and advice on how to succeed, and chat with other quitters and ex-smokers who understand what they are facing.

Health – benefits to quitting smoking

- 20 minutes after quitting your blood pressure and pulse return to normal
- 48 hours - no nicotine is left in your body. Your senses of taste and smell are greatly improved.
- 72 hours - your breathing becomes easier and your energy levels increase
- 2-12 weeks after quitting smoking your circulation improves and exercise can be easier
- 3-9 months - any coughs, wheezing and breathing problems improve
- Within five years the risk of heart attack is halved
- Within 10 years the risk of lung cancer is halved and the risk of heart attack is at the same level as non-smokers
- Medium to long term – stopping smoking at any age increases your life expectancy, provided you stop before the onset of serious disease. Even if you have developed a disease, you can benefit from stopping as your body will be under less strain and be able to fight it more easily.

Wealth - The financial benefits of stopping soon add up too. After:

- **1 day:** £6.30 = a movie rental or a few magazines
- **1 week:** £44.10 = facial, a cheap flight or DVDs, paintballing, a day at the races
- **1 month:** £189 = a shopping spree or premiership football tickets
- **3 months:** £567 = holiday or a new laptop, flat screen TV
- **6 months:** £1,134 = football season ticket, a family holiday or a home cinema, top of the range bicycle
- **1 year:** £2,299 = a new kitchen, a second hand car or a luxury leather suite

*Please note that these figures are based on a 20-a-day smoker paying £6.30 per packet of 20 cigarettes.

Help and support

Free helplines can tell you the location of your nearest free stop smoking service, give you access to specialist counsellors and send you further information:

NORTHERN IRELAND 0808 812 8008

The Helpline run by Ulster Cancer Foundation funded by the Public Health Agency (Northern Ireland)

Local Stop Smoking Services

These free local services have helped thousands to quit for good. You are four times more likely to stop successfully with their help.

Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT)

It comes in gums, lozenges or patches which wean you off nicotine while you stop smoking. Used correctly NRT can double your chance of stopping.

Zyban® (bupropion)

This drug treatment changes your brain's response to nicotine. It makes smoking less pleasurable, reduces craving and can double your chance of succeeding. This is not suitable for everyone; ask your doctor for more information.

Champix® (varenicline)

This is a non-nicotine treatment that works by providing relief from cravings and withdrawal symptoms, and reducing the pleasure you get from smoking if you do smoke while using it. Studies have shown that it can increase the odds for stopping successfully by up to four times. Ask your doctor for more information.

www.wequit.co.uk

Check out the online forum where you can seek support from other ex-smokers and smokers trying to quit, as well as a Facebook app, interactive tools, local services, top tips to quit and much more. Run by the No Smoking Day Charity.

Alternative therapies

Many therapists (acupuncturists, hypnotherapists etc.) advertise services for smokers who want to stop. While some people find them helpful, they are not tested in the same way as products like NRT.

For more information please contact Yvonne McDonald or Vishnee Sauntoo at No Smoking Day on 020 7739 5110, 07770 657241 or email press@nosmokingday.org.uk

For local spokespeople please contact the Ulster Cancer Foundation press office on 028 9066 3281 or email paulinewylie@ulstercancer.org