

Smoking and HIV

How does smoking affect your general health?

Smoking can lead to premature death and smoking related illnesses that can negatively affect your quality of life. One in two smokers will die from a smoking related disease.

How do the effects of smoking differ between someone with HIV and someone who does not have HIV?

- Smoking is responsible for 33% of lung-related deaths and 29% of cancer related deaths in the UK.
- Evidence suggests that if you smoke and are HIV positive, you are more likely to develop smoking-related diseases earlier in life compared to someone who smokes and does not have an HIV diagnosis.
- Smoking with HIV makes you more likely to develop several HIV-related infections.
- Smoking slows the rate at which your body metabolises medication.

How would quitting improve my health?

Stopping smoking will reduce your risk of developing lung cancer and other respiratory diseases, such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. It will also reduce the risk of stroke and heart attack due to blockages of the blood supply.

What happens after I stop smoking?

- After 20 minutes your heart rate and blood pressure return to normal.
- After eight-24 hours your lungs start to clear out mucus and other smoking debris.
- After 72 hours your breathing is easier and you have more energy. Your sense of smell and taste improve.
- After two-12 weeks your circulation improves and it becomes easier to walk and exercise.
- After three-nine months your lung function increases by up to 10%.
- After five years your risk of suffering a heart attack is cut by half.
- After 10 years your risk of getting lung cancer is half that of a smoker. Your risk of a heart attack is the same as someone who has never smoked.

Stopping smoking is one of the most important things you can do for your health. You are four times more likely to stop with the help of an NHS service (using stop smoking medication and support).

To be referred to your local stop smoking service or to speak to a specialist advisor please contact the Royal Free London stop smoking service on 020 7472 6393 or email rf.stopsmoking@nhs.net.

Alternatively you can call the National Stop Smoking Service on 0300 123 1044.