

HELP US TO HELP YOU GET FIT FOR YOUR OPERATION SUPPORT TO QUIT SMOKING

HELP US TO HELP YOU... **IMPROVE YOUR HEALTH**

We know that the way we live our lives can affect our long-term health. Smoking can cause a number of serious, life-threatening conditions; affect your quality of life and the lives of your friends and family too.

You may feel great, but if you need surgery and you smoke, you are at a greater risk of serious complications during or after your operation. Your recovery can be seriously delayed too.

That's why people in Hertfordshire who smoke and are referred for routine, non-urgent operations under general, spinal or epidural anaesthetic need to give up smoking or switch entirely to e-cigarettes for at least 8 weeks before their operation takes place.

The good news is that there is lots of free support in Hertfordshire to help you to stop smoking and get as fit as possible before your operation.

HELP US TO HELP YOU... **REDUCE POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS**

Smoking greatly increases the possibility of developing these complications during or after your operation:

- starving your heart and body of oxygen
- blood clots forming in your veins, which can block the blood vessels to your lungs
- finding it harder to breathe during and after surgery
- increasing your risk of chest and other infections
- poorer healing of your body's tissues, muscles, bones, wounds and skin
- changing the breakdown of certain drugs in your body
- slowing your recovery time after a general anaesthetic
- increasing the amount of time you need to stay in hospital.

DID YOU KNOW?

Smoking increases your risk of developing complications during and after an operation

GOOD NEWS

Six weeks after quitting smoking, you should be able to notice an improvement in your breathing

HELP US TO HELP YOU... **RECOVER FROM YOUR OP**

You can reduce your risk of complications and there are many benefits to stopping smoking before surgery. You will improve your heart rate, blood pressure and the oxygen levels in your blood. You will get rid of the many poisons breathed in with tobacco smoke.

After only six weeks, your lungs will produce less mucus, which will help your breathing during surgery.

If you take steps to improve your health and stop smoking, you are likely to have:

- a faster recovery
- better wound healing
- a shorter stay in hospital
- less need for intensive care
- less need for further surgery
- less risk of a heart attack, stroke or cancer
- a longer healthier life; free from tobacco

HELP US TO HELP YOU... **STOP SMOKING**

Your GP will now refer you to one of the free Stop Smoking Services funded by Hertfordshire County Council. Once they have received your details, an adviser will be in touch within 48 hours to help you start your journey to becoming smokefree.

Advisers understand what it's like to smoke and know how to help people stop smoking for the long term. They will:

- provide weekly support for up to twelve weeks, either face-to-face, over the phone or at home if you're disabled
 - advise on nicotine replacement therapy, e-cigarettes and prescription-only medicines
motivate you through challenging times and help you combat cravings
- show your progress with regular carbon monoxide breath tests

This service is free, but prescription charges apply if you usually pay for medicines.

Hertfordshire Health Improvement Service can be contacted:

by phoning: 0800 389 3998

by texting SMOKEFREE to 80818

DID YOU KNOW?

Hertfordshire has over 300 local Stop Smoking Services, offering non-judgemental support to anyone who lives or works in Hertfordshire

QUESTIONS YOU MAY HAVE**Where can I find a Stop Smoking Service?**

Stop Smoking Advisers are available at hundreds of clinics across Hertfordshire. Some advisers are based in GP surgeries and pharmacies.

Find a clinic near you:

www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/stopsmoking

or call 0800 389 3998 and talk to an adviser.

What if I want to stop smoking without the help of a Stop Smoking Service?

If you would rather stop smoking independently, that's fine, although you are four times more likely to quit with expert help. You will still need to get in touch with a Stop Smoking Adviser and tell them when you plan to stop smoking. The Adviser will be in contact again after four weeks and eight weeks.

What happens once I have stopped smoking for 8 weeks?

Congratulate yourself – you are on the road to a healthier future. Eight weeks after you stop smoking, your smoking status will be tested by a Stop Smoking Adviser at a local Hertfordshire Health Improvement Service clinic. This is a simple breath test which takes less than 30 seconds.

When you have successfully quit smoking for at least 8 weeks, you will be given a 'Smokefree' certificate and your GP will be notified. Visit your CCG website (details on the back page) if you have any questions about what happens next. Please remember to keep your smokefree certificate safe as you will need to bring this certificate to your pre-operative assessment clinic.

What happens if I haven't managed to stop smoking?

If after nine months you have tried to stop smoking twice without success, your Stop Smoking Adviser will contact the doctor who referred you and ask them to review your case. Your GP will make sure that you're getting all the help that you need and will discuss with hospital specialists whether it is safe for you to have an operation despite the fact that you are still smoking.

What if my condition changes during the 9 month period?

If you feel that there is a change in your health or wellbeing which means that your need for an operation has become more urgent, make an appointment with your GP. Your GP can review the urgency of your situation with you.

Can my doctor still refer me for tests or a consultant's opinion?

Your GP can still refer you for tests and a specialist opinion. However, they may decide to wait until you are ready to start your quit attempt, or they may wait until you have successfully quit smoking first.

Are exceptions ever made to the stop smoking policy?

Yes, exceptions are made when:

- patients need urgent or emergency surgery
- patients need surgery for cancer, or suspected cancer
- patients undergo surgery under local anaesthetic
- patients need heart surgery, cardiothoracic surgery, neurosurgery or fracture procedures
- patients only use e-cigarettes/vape
- a doctor considers that the risk to a patient of waiting for an operation outweighs the benefits of stopping smoking.

Where do I go if I have any concerns or queries?

If you have any questions about the support available to stop smoking, please ask at your GP practice or speak to a Stop Smoking Adviser, using the contact details in this leaflet.

You can also contact your CCG using the details on the back page of this leaflet.

FURTHER SUPPORT

For more information and advice about keeping healthy and well in Hertfordshire, please visit:

www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/healthinherts or call HertsHelp on 0300 123 4044.

For self-help tips to stop smoking, visit www.nhs.uk/smoking

The policy outlined in this booklet was agreed after a public consultation, which was carried out by East and North Hertfordshire CCG and Herts Valleys CCG in 2017.

DID YOU KNOW?

You are four times more likely to quit smoking with the help of Hertfordshire Stop Smoking Services

CONTACT US

East and North Hertfordshire CCG

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Herts Valleys CCG

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