

### Regular physical activity

Now that you have stopped smoking, you may wish to get more fit. Regular physical activity is good for your health and has many benefits for your heart. It helps to manage your weight and can also improve your body's ability to meet the demands and stresses of daily living.

### Start saving money

Put away the money you would normally spend on cigarettes and plan what you will do with the savings.

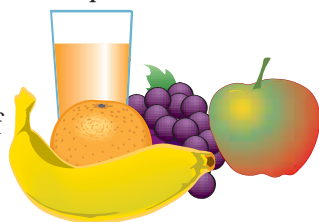
If you smoke 20 cigarettes a day, you will save over €2,000 euros a year.



### Watch what you eat

Try not to substitute cigarettes with sweets, cakes and biscuits. Do not skip meals, especially breakfast.

For snacks, try fruit, vegetables or low-fat snacks. Drink plenty of water and other fluids such as diet drinks or fruit juices.



### Take one day at a time

Each day without a cigarette is good news for your health, your family and your pocket.

### No excuses

Don't use a crisis or special celebration as an excuse for just one cigarette. There's no such thing. One cigarette leads to another, and another, and another.

## Some useful aids for stopping smoking

When stopping smoking, motivation and determination are the key to success. However, as well as support and counselling, there are several aids on the market today which may help some smokers. None of these aids provide a magic instant formula for success, but they may help some people stop smoking. Other people may need more counselling and support.

### Nicotine replacement therapies (NRT)

NRT can increase the chances of success for smokers who are ready to stop. The most common forms of NRT, available from your pharmacist without a prescription, are gum, patches, inhalers and microtabs. NRT replaces some of the nicotine that you previously got from smoking, but at lower levels. These levels are just enough to help relieve withdrawal symptoms and to help you concentrate on breaking the smoking habit. NRT is available free to those with a medical card.

### Warning

Always talk to your pharmacist before using any of these nicotine replacement products. You should use NRT under doctor's supervision if you have a history of heart disease. Like any medicine or drug, keep all NRT products away from children. Do not smoke when using NRT.



*Talk to your pharmacist*

### Zyban

This is a non-nicotine medication which can help some people stop smoking. It is only available on prescription. Your GP or hospital consultant will advise if you should try this medication.

### What about light cigarettes or cigars?

Light or low-tar cigarettes or cigars are not an alternative to stopping smoking. Smokers who switch to light or low-tar cigarette brands breathe in more deeply and do not reduce their risk.

Cigars contain high levels of carbon monoxide, which reduces the amount of oxygen the blood can carry, so they increase your risk of heart disease.

**For support and advice on quitting,  
call the Quitline on 1850 201 203**

### Local contact:

For more information contact:

**The National Quitline at 1850 201 203  
or  
your local health board  
or**

**The Irish Heart Foundation,  
4 Clyde Road, Ballsbridge, Dublin 4.  
Phone: 01 6685001  
Email: [info@irishheart.ie](mailto:info@irishheart.ie)  
Website: [www.irishheart.ie](http://www.irishheart.ie)**

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# Stopping smoking for a healthy and happy heart



Be smoke-free for a happy heart

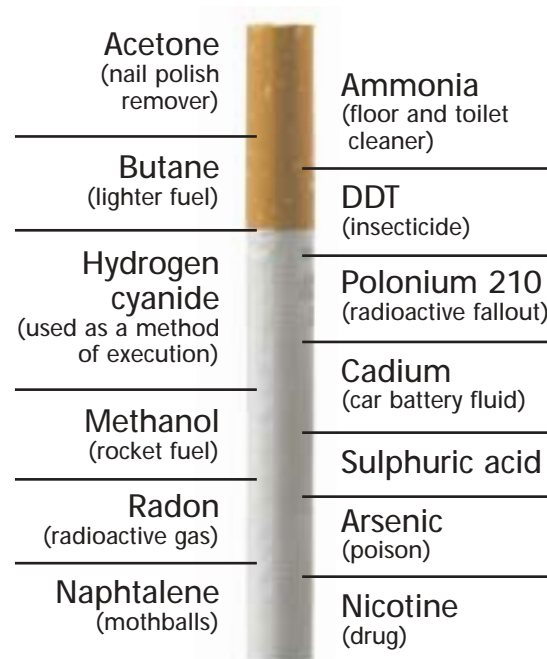
## Smoking and heart disease

Smoking is a major risk factor for heart disease, including heart attacks and stroke. Smokers are twice as likely to suffer a heart attack than non-smokers. However, once you stop smoking your health improves immediately and you begin to reduce your risk of heart disease.

To help you stop, there are several supports available. This leaflet outlines the positive changes for your health when you stop smoking, offers some useful tips on how to quit successfully and outlines some of the commonly used aids.

## What's in a cigarette

4,000 chemicals including:



Acetone (nail polish remover)	Ammonia (floor and toilet cleaner)
Butane (lighter fuel)	DDT (insecticide)
Hydrogen cyanide (used as a method of execution)	Polonium 210 (radioactive fallout)
Methanol (rocket fuel)	Cadmium (car battery fluid)
Radon (radioactive gas)	Sulphuric acid
Naphtalene (mothballs)	Arsenic (poison)
	Nicotine (drug)

Cigarettes also produce tar - a sticky brown substance that forms when tobacco cools. This collects in the lungs and can cause cancer.

## How does smoking affect my heart and circulation?

- ◆ Nicotine is a highly addictive drug. It causes your blood vessels to narrow, increases your heart rate and raises your blood pressure.
- ◆ Carbon monoxide, which is a poisonous gas, reduces the amount of oxygen your blood can carry. This means that your heart has to work harder to get enough oxygen round your body. This can contribute to heart attack and angina (severe chestpain).
- ◆ Smoking contributes to the long-term clogging or narrowing of the arteries and also to the risk of blood clots. These clots can suddenly block an artery completely, causing a heart attack or stroke.
- ◆ Smoking increases LDL (bad) cholesterol and reduces HDL (good) cholesterol. High levels of LDL cholesterol are a risk for heart disease.
- ◆ Cigarette smoking contributes to blocked blood vessels especially in the legs and feet, leading to poor circulation and an increased risk of developing circulatory disease.
- ◆ Smoking increases the risk of heart attacks and strokes in women using the oral contraceptive pill.

**Quitting smoking is the best thing you can do for a healthy and happy heart.**

**If you are thinking of stopping smoking, call the Quitline on 1850 201 203**



## The good news

**It is never too late to stop smoking. The benefits begin as soon as you stop.**

Within **20 minutes**, your blood pressure and pulse rate will return to normal. Circulation improves in your hands and feet, making them warmer.

Within **eight hours** of stopping, the oxygen level in your blood will rise to normal and your carbon monoxide level will fall.

Within **24 hours**, the chance of you suffering a heart attack and stroke begins to fall.

Within **72 hours**, you can hold more air in your lungs. Breathing becomes easier. Your energy levels increase.

Within **days**, your blood is less likely to clot.

Within **five years**, the risk of a heart attack falls to about half that of a smoker.

Within **10 years**, you will have about the same risk of heart disease as someone who has never smoked.

There are many more benefits including increased energy and you will be free from the worry that you are damaging your health, as well as that of your family and friends.

## Tips for stopping smoking

### Prepare to stop smoking

Write down your reasons for stopping and keep the list to hand.

### Make a date to stop.

Pick your day to stop and stick to it.

### Get support.

Ask a friend or family for support or to stop smoking with you.

### Think positive

You may find you experience withdrawal symptoms once you stop smoking. These are, in fact, the positive signs that your body is recovering from the effects of tobacco. A cough, irritability and sleep disturbances are some common symptoms. Don't worry, they're all perfectly normal and they will disappear within a week or two.

### Learn to deal with cravings

Cravings can often happen during the first few days after stopping. A craving gets worse for three to five minutes and then begins to disappear.

So when the craving starts, apply the 4D's.

**Delay** at least three minutes - the urge will pass.

**Drink** a glass of water or fruit juice.

**Distract** yourself - move away from the situation.

**Deep** breaths. Breathe slowly and deeply.

### Change your routine

Smoking is often linked to certain times and situations, such as the first smoke in the morning, and drinking tea, coffee or alcohol. Avoid those situations by doing something different at these times.

**If you are ready to stop, call the Quitline on 1850 201 203.**