

## Why is it hard to stop smoking?

Smoking can be hard to stop as cigarettes and tobacco contain a substance called nicotine which many smokers become addicted to.

## How to stop smoking

Your doctor and/or dentist is a good place to help seek advice and support on how to stop smoking.

Your GP can offer support in the form of leaflets, phone numbers and counselling specific for smoking cessation. In addition they may prescribe you nicotine replacement therapy/medications to help you in your journey.

## Counselling can take the form of:

- Advice from your GP.
- Quit smoking sessions led by a specially trained nurse/counsellor/psychologist.
- Quit smoking group sessions which meet regularly allow people going through the same situation to share their experiences and journey.



Gum disease caused by smoking

## What are the benefits of stopping smoking?

- Improved gum health.
- No smoking related bad breath.
- Improved blood pressure and pulse rate.
- Improved blood circulation.
- Reduced risk of getting any smoking related diseases.

## Further information:-

[www.nhs.uk/conditions/cancer-of-the-mouth](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/cancer-of-the-mouth)

[www.mouthcancerfoundation.org](http://www.mouthcancerfoundation.org)

This leaflet has been produced with guidance from the Plain English Campaign and British Dyslexia Association to make it easier for you to read

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Patient Information Leaflet

# WHY IT'S IMPORTANT TO STOP SMOKING

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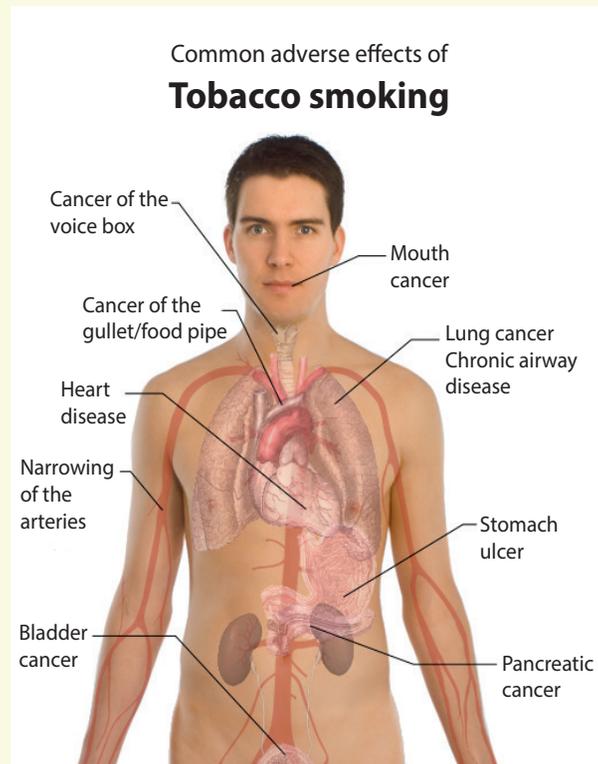
Registered Charity No 1073464 [www.bos.org.uk](http://www.bos.org.uk)

Nearly 120,000 people die each year from diseases related to their smoking habits.

Your dentist/orthodontist can offer advice and support about smoking cessation as it can affect your general and oral health long term.

### FACTs about smoking

- Nearly 10 million people in Great Britain smoke cigarettes of which 10% are male and 17% are female.
- 50% of all smokers will die from a smoking related disease including lung cancer, heart disease or stroke.



### How can smoking affect my general health?

- Breathing can be affected by substances such as tar and other chemicals in tobacco which can damage your lungs. This can lead to frequent coughs and chest infections.
- Your immune system is weakened by smoking and does not work as well. This makes it harder for your body to fight infections.
- Long term smoking habits can lead to permanent damage to your lungs leading to chronic obstructive pulmonary disease or lung cancer.
- Carbon monoxide contained in tobacco smoke enters the blood stream which can reduce the oxygen carrying capacity of your red blood cells. This can lead to more strain on your heart and make you feel tired as a result.
- Blood vessels are known to narrow due to smoking which increases your risk of a heart attack or stroke.
- Pregnant women who smoke are at higher risk of damaging their unborn child.
- Passive smoking, also known as second hand smoking, is when you breathe in someone else's cigarette smoke and this can also cause cancer and other health problems. Every year, second-hand smoking kills thousands of people in the UK from lung cancer, heart disease, stroke and lung disease.

### How can smoking affect my oral health?

- Oral cancer, also known as mouth cancer, is where a non-healing ulcer develops in the lining of the mouth. This may occur in areas such as the tongue, cheeks, lips or roof of the mouth. It is linked to smoking, chewing tobacco products and alcohol consumption.
- If an ulcer has not healed within three weeks it is important to visit your doctor or dentist.
- Early signs of smoking can cause your gums to appear red, puffy and bleed when you brush your teeth. This is known as gum disease or gingivitis.
- Long term effects of smoking can cause the gums to shrink around the teeth and loss of bone holding the teeth in the jaw bone. This is called periodontal disease.
- Eventually the teeth may become loose, painful and may even fall out.
- Smoking causes bad breath.
- Your teeth will become stained yellow and brown as a result of smoking.



Tobacco staining on teeth