

QUITTING SMOKING

SUPPORT FOR PEOPLE WITH MENTAL HEALTH CONDITIONS

THREE GOOD REASONS TO QUIT

- 1** Quitting smoking **improves your mental health** – it can reduce depression, anxiety, and stress and improve positive mood and quality of life.
- 2** Quitting smoking will save you **up to £2,800 a year**.
- 3** Quitting smoking improves your physical health – **reducing your risk of 16 different cancers**, stroke, heart disease and many other conditions.



FACT

Support is available to help you quit smoking - find local services here: www.nhs.uk/smokefree



FACT

Quitting smoking will protect the people around you from secondhand smoke which causes serious health conditions from asthma to cancer



FACT

Using an e-cigarette (vaping) is the most popular way to quit smoking in the UK



FACT

Combination NRT (e.g. nicotine gum with a nicotine patch) and Varenicline (Champix) are also effective stop-smoking aids



FACT

Quitting smoking can improve anxiety and depression **as much as anti-depressants**



FACT

Quitting smoking can **reduce the amount** of anti-psychotic medications (e.g. clozapine) you need to take



FACT

Children who live with parents or siblings who smoke are up to **three times more likely** to become smokers themselves

Isn't varenicline (Champix) dangerous for people with mental health conditions?

A. Varenicline (Champix) is a stop smoking medication which helps to relieve cravings and withdrawal symptoms when quitting smoking. Varenicline (Champix) **can be used safely** by people with mental health conditions, as prescribed by your doctor.

I've tried quitting before and didn't succeed. Why will this time be different?

A. Many people try to quit smoking 'cold turkey' and don't succeed. If you speak to your GP or community mental health team about varenicline (Champix), nicotine replacement therapy (NRT), e-cigarettes and/or behavioural support, you will be much more likely to quit successfully. Plus, the more quit attempts you make, **the more likely you are to succeed**.

Won't my mental health suffer if I quit smoking?

A. Quitting smoking makes your mental health **better!** It is associated with reduced levels of depression, stress and anxiety as well as improved mood. Stress that comes from stopping smoking is caused by nicotine withdrawal and can be treated with varenicline (Champix), NRT and/or e-cigarettes. It is also **short-term** and will stop once your nicotine needs are being managed without tobacco (within 4-6 weeks).

Are e-cigarettes safe?

A. Using an e-cigarette is **much less harmful** than smoking. E-cigarettes don't contain tobacco, so they don't produce the toxic tar or carbon monoxide that cigarettes do. They are also effective for helping you quit. The vaping related health problems seen in the USA appear to be caused by chemicals that are banned from e-liquids in the UK. Always buy e-cigarettes from official outlets like vape shops, so you know they're properly regulated.

What if I'm not ready to quit completely?

A. Some people need to switch to other sources of nicotine to help them quit smoking. You can use NRT or e-cigarettes to protect yourself and your loved ones from harmful cigarette smoke. You may also be supported to 'cut down to quit' by your local stop smoking support.

What should I expect from my community mental health team/GP?

A. You should be:

- Told about the risks of smoking and the benefits of quitting.
- Referred to specialist stop smoking support where you can get help to quit.
- Told where you can get NRT or Varenicline (Champix) to help you reduce the amount you smoke, even if you're unable to quit completely.



See stories from people with mental health conditions who have quit smoking at: tinyurl.com/swmhc

