

## SMOKING AND PREGNANCY

*Stopping smoking is the single most important thing you can do to protect your health. If you're pregnant, or even thinking about getting pregnant, giving up will help protect your baby's health too.*

When you smoke:

- You breathe in nicotine, tar and carbon monoxide
- You also breathe in around 4,000 other chemicals, many of them poisonous – like arsenic, ammonia and benzene.
- The tar and some chemicals build up inside your lungs, where they may eventually cause cancer.
- Nicotine, carbon monoxide and the other chemicals rush from your lungs into your bloodstream, reducing the amount of oxygen in your blood.

**All these substances get into your baby's bloodstream from yours.**

You probably already know that quitting smoking will reduce your risk of serious illnesses, but there are extra benefits if you're pregnant. Medical research has shown that women who smoke while pregnant:

- Are more likely to suffer from sickness, bleeding or miscarriage, and other pregnancy complications; and
- Have babies that are premature, ill or underweight and at greater risk of stillbirth or cot death.

### **Isn't it too late if I am already pregnant?**

Giving up smoking at any stage in your pregnancy is good for you and your baby – it's never too late. As soon as you stop, the chemicals will start to clear from your body and your baby will get more oxygen. So give yourself and your baby a head start by giving up for good.

### **How do I give up?**

There is no 'quick fix' to giving up smoking. If you want to give up smoking for good, you need to take a closer look at your smoking and understand why you smoke. What are the effects of smoking on your life and your future – good and bad?

You may find that your level of motivation changes from day-to-day depending on your mood and the situations you find yourself in. Changing your attitude to smoking, making the decision to give up, and changing your lifestyle are important in your success. There are things you can do to help yourself stay focused on your goal to quit smoking for good.

### **Start a Quit Plan:**

Plan to give up by logging on to [www.giveupsmoking.ie](http://www.giveupsmoking.ie) to find out how to create your own Quit Plan. It will help you to:

- Take a closer look at your smoking and identify what makes you smoke
- Help find realistic ways to deal with your triggers
- Learn new ways to deal with the difficult (high risk) situations
- Make a plan of action to help you stop smoking for good
- Figure out ways of living your life without tobacco.

You can also contact the **National Smokers' Quitline on callsave 1850 201 203** to speak to an advisor or get in contact with an HSE Give Up Smoking service near you.

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