



Living Well North Tyneside

Supporting Health and Wellbeing

Every October, thousands of smokers across the UK join Stoptober, the nation's largest quit-smoking campaign. Organised by Public Health England and supported by the NHS, Stoptober encourages smokers to make a quit attempt for 28 days throughout October—and hopefully beyond. The campaign is based on research showing that if you can stop smoking for 28 days, you're five times more likely to quit for good.

Why Quit Smoking?

Smoking remains one of the leading causes of preventable illness and premature death in the UK. It is linked to a wide range of life-threatening conditions, including lung cancer, heart disease, stroke, and chronic respiratory diseases. Quitting smoking can significantly reduce your risk of these conditions and improve your overall health, no matter how long you've been smoking.

In addition to the personal health benefits, quitting also reduces exposure to second-hand smoke for family members, friends, and colleagues. Financially, smokers who quit can save thousands of pounds each year.

The Stoptober Challenge

Stoptober's main goal is to provide smokers with the support, resources, and motivation needed to help them quit successfully. By encouraging smokers to take on a 28-day challenge, the campaign leverages the power of community and collective action. Thousands of people participate each year, providing an encouraging sense of solidarity for those trying to quit.

How Stoptober Can Help You Quit

Stoptober offers a range of free tools and support to help smokers through their quit attempt. Here are some of the resources available:

- **NHS Quit Smoking App** – A free app offering daily support, motivation, and personalised tips to help you through your 28-day quit journey.
- **Personal Quit Plan** – You can create a tailored quit plan based on your smoking habits and lifestyle, which can include nicotine replacement therapies (NRT) like patches, gum, or inhalers.
- **Support Groups** – Joining a local or online support group can provide the encouragement and motivation you need to stay smoke-free. Peer support has been shown to significantly increase the chances of successfully quitting.
- **Stop Smoking Services** – The NHS offers free, specialist services designed to help you quit. These services often include advice from health professionals and access to NRT or stop-smoking medications.
- **Social Media** – Engage with others participating in Stoptober through social media platforms using the hashtag #Stoptober. Sharing your progress and hearing success stories from others can help keep you on track.

Benefits of Quitting

Quitting smoking brings immediate and long-term health benefits. Here's what happens to your body after you stop smoking:

- **20 minutes** – Your heart rate begins to return to normal.
- **48 hours** – All carbon monoxide is flushed from your body, and your sense of taste and smell start to improve.
- **72 hours** – Breathing becomes easier, as your bronchial tubes start to relax.
- **2-12 weeks** – Blood circulation improves, making physical activity easier.
- **1 year** – The risk of heart attack is cut by half compared to a smoker.
- **10 years** – The risk of developing lung cancer falls to half that of a smoker.

Staying Smoke-Free Beyond Stoptober

While the 28-day Stoptober challenge is an excellent starting point, many participants aim to stay smoke-free for life. The key to long-term success is finding strategies that work for you. Here are some tips to help maintain your quit attempt beyond October:

- **Identify Triggers** – Recognise the situations or emotions that trigger your cravings and find ways to manage them. Whether it's stress, social situations, or certain habits, knowing your triggers can help you avoid or cope with them.
- **Stay Active** – Physical activity can help reduce cravings and withdrawal symptoms. Even light exercises like walking or stretching can make a big difference.
- **Reward Yourself** – Use the money you would have spent on cigarettes to treat yourself. Seeing the financial savings can be a powerful motivator.
- **Keep a Positive Mindset** – Quitting smoking is challenging, but setbacks are normal. If you slip up, don't be too hard on yourself—just refocus and keep going.

The Future of a Smoke-Free Nation

The success of campaigns like Stoptober is part of the broader effort to make the UK a smoke-free nation. By encouraging smokers to quit and offering robust support, the NHS and Public Health England aim to drastically reduce the number of smokers in the country. Quitting smoking can save lives, reduce the strain on the healthcare system, and create healthier, happier communities.

If you're a smoker, there's no better time to take the plunge. Make October the month you quit for good, and join thousands of others in the Stoptober challenge. Together, we can take steps toward a healthier, smoke-free future.

Related Links

- [Visit the NHS Smokefree website to access free resources, support, and advice.](#)

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