

What support is available to help me quit smoking?

Stopping smoking is one of the best things you can do for your baby's health.

Health professionals are here to support you and can refer you to:

- The Stop Smoking Nurse Advisors at local GP surgeries or pharmacies or specialist service for Mid Sussex and West Sussex, local helpline: 0300 100 1823
- Anna Fairhurst, Smoking Cessation Service Lead based at Royal Sussex County Hospital for Brighton. Tel: 01273 696955 x7445

Smoking in pregnancy

Patient Information leaflet

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Disclaimer

The information in this leaflet is for guidance purposes only and is in no way intended to replace professional clinical advice by a qualified practitioner.

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Why should my partner and I stop smoking if we want to have a baby?

Smoking can affect the fertility of men and women.

- Men who smoke have a lower sperm count and more malformed (abnormal) sperm
- Women who smoke take longer to conceive and are twice as likely to be infertile compared with non-smokers.
- Men and women who smoke have a poorer response to fertility treatment.

Why should I stop smoking when I'm pregnant?

Smoking can cause harm to your baby. Stopping smoking is probably the most effective single step you can take to improve your own health and your baby's health.

The damage caused by smoking does not just happen in the first three months of pregnancy. The further into pregnancy that you smoke, the greater the risk of complications.

Every cigarette smoked reduces the oxygen supply to your baby for 20 minutes, so even just three cigarettes a day means that your baby has had a reduction of oxygen for 1 hour that day alone.

What are the risks of smoking when I'm pregnant?

- Smoking increases the risk of ectopic pregnancy (when a fertilised egg implants itself outside the womb, usually in a fallopian tube). Unfortunately, it is not possible to save an ectopic pregnancy, and it usually has to be removed by an operation.
- Smoking increases the risk of miscarriage.
- You are three times more likely to have a low birth weight baby (smaller than 2.5kg). Their organs are smaller on average than babies born to non-smokers. Low birth weight can cause lots of problems for your baby, including disability and illness.
- You are more likely to have a premature baby (a baby that is born too early).
- You are more at risk of developing placental problems, such as placenta previa (when your placenta lies too low in your womb, near to or covering your cervix) and placental abruption (when your placenta starts to come away from the inside of the womb wall).
- Smoking increases the risk of foetal malformations (physical abnormalities in your baby), like a cleft lip and palate.

Will these risks be reduced if I stop smoking now?

Stopping smoking before pregnancy greatly reduces these risks.

Stopping smoking in the first half of pregnancy greatly reduces the risk of a low baby birth weight.

Stopping at any stage of your pregnancy gives you health benefits.

What are the risks of smoking after my baby is born?

Babies who are born to parents who smoke are:

- Three times more likely to be at risk of cot death.
- Have poorer lung function.
- More at risk of developing asthma or have an increase in the severity of their asthma attacks.
- More at risk of middle ear disease.
- Likely to be smaller and lighter and more prone to infections.
- Possibly more likely to have ADHD (Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder).
- More likely to become smokers themselves.