

What Can I do About Smoking?

Advice for Health Visitors

Smoking is still the biggest cause of premature death and mortality and the largest cause of inequalities. Half of the people who smoke will die prematurely as a result of their habit. There are many benefits to individuals and society to be gained by encouraging and supporting people to give up smoking.

Smoking remains a major cause of new-born deaths, early births and babies born with low birth weight. In the UK, smoking in pregnancy causes up to 5,000 miscarriages, 300 perinatal deaths and around 2,200 premature births each year.

In Warwickshire:

- 1 in 6 babies are exposed to smoke whilst in the womb
- Each year approximately 800 people die as a result of smoking
- The annual cost of smoking to society is £136.8 million
- Every year 1,600 children start smoking

The NHS Stop Smoking Service provides free support to people wishing to quit, tailored to whichever quitting method they wish to use.

Smokers are up to 4 times more likely to quit if they use the NHS Stop Smoking Service

Children living with smokers are much more likely to start themselves. If both parents smoke, children are four times more likely to start than if neither parent smokes

Smoking can affect fertility and make it more difficult to get pregnant

Smoking more than doubles the risk of developing Age-related Macular Degeneration which is the most common cause of vision loss in people aged over 50.

Smoking can cause impotency

Everyone can do something about smoking

If you are not a smoker you can:

1. Encourage friends, family and colleagues to think about quitting and encourage them with their quit attempts
2. Make sure that anyone thinking about quitting, or trying to do so, knows that there is a free and supportive NHS Stop Smoking Service in Warwickshire – Tel: 0800 085 2917 Text: LIFE to 80800, visit www.smokefreewarwickshire.org
3. The Stop Smoking Service will provide motivational and behavioural support whichever way people want to quit
4. Encourage young people not to start to smoke
5. Be aware of underage sales. If you suspect retailers of selling cigarettes and other tobacco products to underage people, you can report them, in confidence, to Citizens Advice Consumer Service telephone 08454 04 05 06.
6. Be aware of illicit tobacco. If you suspect anyone of selling illicit tobacco, you can report them, in confidence, to either Citizens Advice Consumer Service telephone 08454 04 05 06 or Crime Stoppers telephone 0800 555 111.
7. Be aware of smokefree law which makes it illegal to smoke in enclosed public places. Breaches of the law in Warwickshire can be reported by calling 01926 410410, citing the location of an alleged offence, where calls should be directed to the relevant District Council. The relevant District Council can also be found at <http://local.direct.gov.uk/>



If you are smoker you can:

Do all of the above plus:

- Think about the benefits of quitting, particularly if you have young children or are thinking about starting a family
- Consider using the local NHS Stop Smoking Service to increase your chances of quitting
- Consider cutting down with a view to ultimately quitting

If you are a smoker and want to continue to smoke

- You can consider reducing the harm from smoking by partially or totally switching to a safer alternative, e.g. regulated nicotine replacement product
- Do not expose other people to your smoke, particularly babies, children and pregnant women, as secondhand smoke is known to be harmful

As a Health Visitor, you can do even more:

Raise the issue of smoking with all clients. NOT raising the issue gives permission to continue. Give advice on the harmful effects of smoking e.g. SIDS. Give advice on how to make their home smokefree.

Ask - and record smoking status. Is the patient a smoker, ex-smoker or a non-smoker?

Advise - on the best way of quitting. The best way of stopping smoking is with a combination of medication and specialist support.

Act - on the client's response. Build confidence, give information, refer, prescribe. They are up to 4 times more likely to quit successfully with support. Refer them to their local NHS Stop smoking Service.

Raise the issue at the antenatal visit and refer to the Stop Smoking in Pregnancy Service if the woman is still smoking – phone: 0800 085 2917

Where can I find further information?

Smokefree Warwickshire - www.smokefreewarwickshire.org

Action on Smoking and Health - www.ash.org.uk

Smokefree NHS - www.nhs.uk/smokefree

Quit - www.quit.org.uk

