

Smoking and Diabetes (1 of 1)

As a person with diabetes giving up smoking is one of the most positive things you can do to improve your health and reduce the risks of the long-term complications associated with diabetes. One of the main reasons for this is that smoking narrows your blood vessels. Disease of the blood vessels is a potential complication of diabetes, and can cause heart disease, nerve damage (neuropathy), kidney disease and eye damage (retinopathy). By smoking, you are increasing your risk of these greatly. So, like maintaining good blood glucose control, eating well, regular exercise and keeping to a healthy weight, giving up smoking is one of the most beneficial things you can do for your future health.

Even after eight hours without a cigarette the risk of having a heart attack falls. Over the next few months your circulation and breathing will improve. After five years without smoking the risk of having a heart attack is halved and after ten years it falls to a similar level to those who have never smoked. The risk of lung cancer at this stage is also halved.

Giving up smoking is notoriously difficult. Besides being an addictive drug, the action of smoking is intrinsically linked to daily routines and emotions, which contribute in turn to the difficulty in stopping. However, Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT) doubles the chance of success of smokers wishing to stop. NRT usually provides nicotine in a way that is slower and less satisfying, but safer and less addictive than cigarettes. For the best results NRT should be used in sufficient quantities and for long enough. Bupropion (Zyban), a new nicotine-free tablet, is available only on prescription for some smokers motivated to stop. This treatment, taken as a two-month treatment course, aims to break the cycle of nicotine addiction.

The good news is that stopping works. In addition to the benefits outlined above, a study has shown that stopping smoking, even well into middle age, will help you to avoid most of the risk of developing cancer. Stopping before middle age avoids more than 90% of the health risks associated with smoking.

You can get help on giving up smoking from many different sources. Your diabetes team will give you advice and The South Wilts PCT Smoking Cessation Service holds group sessions as well as individual counselling for those who wish to enter a smoking cessation programme.

Freedom from Smoking:- 01980 626159

South Wilts PCT NHS Smoking Helpline:- 0800 169 0 169

If you need this information in another language or medium (audio, large print, etc) please contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 0800 374 208 email: palservice@salisbury.nhs.uk

You are entitled to a copy of any letter we write about you. Please ask if you want one when you come to the hospital

We ask for information about you so that you can receive proper care and treatment. This information remains confidential and is stored securely by the Trust in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

Author: M Smith
Date written: March 2006
Approved: March 2006
Review date: March 2009
Code: CSNew100

Dr Martin Smith
Diabetes & Endocrinology
Tel.: 01722 336262 ext. 4229