

No Smoking Day March 8th 2023

No Smoking Day is an annual event that always enjoys strong partnership support to get the quitting message out far and wide.

This year Fresh is encouraging all partners to support the theme for 2023 – that **smoking increases the risks of dementia** but stopping smoking improves your brain health.

Just as with lung cancer, it is important to communicate to smokers that your risk of dementia is much higher if you smoke. **Less than one in five** smokers in our region are aware that smoking increases dementia risk.

All video links mentioned below can be found here:

<https://www.freshquit.co.uk/reasons-to-quit/mental-health/>

It's a myth that smoking helps with stress. Quitting can reduce your stress and anxiety.

Consultant psychiatrist Dr Eilish Gilvarry explains....





How does smoking cause stress?

Smoking cigarettes interferes with certain chemicals in the brain. If you haven't had a cigarette for a while, the craving for another one can make you feel irritable and anxious.

These feelings are relieved for a short while when you light up a cigarette. But your body will soon start to crave another, making you feel irritable and anxious again. Smokers are more likely than non-smokers to develop depression over time.



Mental health benefits of quitting

People with mental health problems are likely to feel much calmer, more positive and have a better quality of life after stopping smoking. The effect has been proven to be similar to taking antidepressants. When people stop smoking, studies show:

- anxiety, depression and stress levels are lower
- quality of life and positive mood improve
- the dosage of some medicines used to treat mental health problems can be reduced



How can I make quitting less stressful?

If you want to stop smoking, contact your local stop smoking service who will provide support to quit.

Stop smoking treatments like nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) or e-cigarettes can really help with cravings. You can talk about which stop smoking aids will work best for you.

If you take medicines or antidepressants, it's important you talk to your GP or psychiatrist to help monitor the amount you need to take.

Do you ever think you couldn't cope without cigarettes and smoking helps you cope? In fact quitting could give your mood a real boost. Watch the video below to find out how....



Smoking and dementia

None of us like to think about developing dementia. But evidence is clear that smoking raises the risks of developing dementia.

- Smoking increases the risk of vascular problems which affect blood vessels and can lead to strokes or smaller bleeds in the brain. These increase the risk of dementia.
- Poisonous chemicals in cigarette smoke cause inflammation and stress and kill off brain cells and neurons, which increase the risk of Alzheimer's Disease.

[Alzheimer's Research UK](#) advise: "evidence is that stopping smoking reduces your risk of dementia. This is similar to other findings with smoking, where stopping smoking leads to a reduction in the risk of cardiovascular disease or cancer."