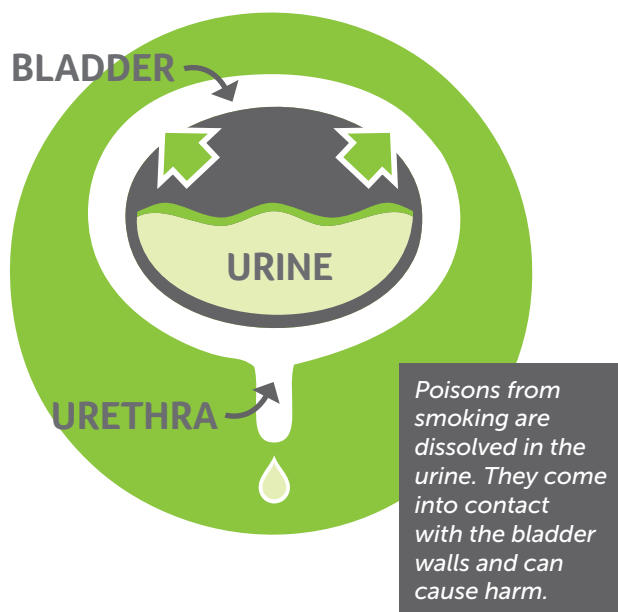


Stopping smoking

There is more information on bladder cancer and its treatment on our website at actionbladdercanceruk.org

Exercising regularly, eating healthily, drinking less alcohol and not smoking are the essentials of a healthy lifestyle. If you have been diagnosed with bladder cancer, now is a good time to think about whether you can make some changes. Improving your fitness and general health before you have treatment and/or surgery is likely to help you recover better from the effects. It can also give you a positive focus.



Although many non-smokers develop bladder cancer, smoking greatly increases a person's risk of developing it. The poisons in cigarette smoke leave the body in urine. And because urine is held in the bladder for some time before you pass it, the bladder is exposed to high levels of these poisons for several hours at a time.

If you smoke and have bladder cancer, there are important reasons to quit.

After diagnosis

Giving up smoking after your diagnosis is a positive change you can make. It *will* make a difference. Here are two good reasons to stop smoking now.

Smokers can feel worse with cancer treatment than non-smokers. The unpleasant effects, which can include fatigue, nausea and pain, are worse in people who smoke than non-smokers. And this difference between how smokers feel compared with non-smokers can last as long as 6 months after treatment. In contrast, smokers who quit before treatment starts have a similar experience to non-smokers.

What happens when you stop smoking

- **Straightaway:** you are no longer breathing in poisons from your cigarette smoke, and your urine is now clear of these
- **Straightaway:** your family and people around you are not breathing in the poisons from your cigarette smoke
- **Straightaway:** your heart rate and blood pressure are lowered (smoking increases them)
- **Within a few hours:** the level of harmful carbon monoxide in the blood begins to fall
- **Within a few weeks:** your circulation improves and coughing or wheezing is reduced
- **Within several months:** your lungs are working better

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Treatment may also be less effective if you smoke. For example, smoking might interfere with the way your body processes a chemotherapy drug.

If you have surgery, smoking increases the risk of complications of the surgery itself. And smoking also makes recovery harder, as it affects the body's blood circulation and ability to heal.

During treatment

Stopping smoking at any stage will help – there are immediate benefits that will help you feel better and your body cope better with treatment (see Box ①).

Smoking increases the risk of cancer – as bladder cancer can come back (recur) after treatment, it makes sense to stop. There is evidence to suggest that stopping or reducing smoking following diagnosis might reduce the risk of bladder cancer recurring. By stopping, you are also reducing your chances of developing another type of cancer.

Free stop smoking support

IN ENGLAND:

- Go to www.nhs.uk/smokefree
- Call the free Smokefree National Helpline on 0300 123 1044

IN SCOTLAND:

- Go to www.nhsinform.scot/quit-your-way-scotland
- Call the free Smokeline on 0800 84 84 84

IN WALES:

- Go to www.helpmequit.wales
- Call the free Help Me Quit Wales Helpline on 0800 085 2219

IN NORTHERN IRELAND:

- Go to www.stopsmokingni.info/



Stopping for good

Giving up smoking at any time is tough, but when you've just been diagnosed with bladder cancer or are going through treatment, it may seem too much to ask. But you don't have to go cold turkey and just stop overnight. These days there are stop smoking services and products that can help.

Passive smoking, when you breathe in second-hand smoke, is also dangerous. If you live with a smoker or spend a lot of time with one, encourage him or her to give up too. Their health will benefit, and they'll be helping you, too.

Using nicotine-replacement therapy can help control cravings. Your GP or pharmacist can advise you how much to use – often people don't use enough to stop the cravings. Combining a patch with an inhalator, gum, microtab or nasal spray is a way of ensuring there's enough nicotine in your system to help you get through.

Using a local service Your GP can refer you to a local NHS Stop Smoking service, or you can find one using the information shown in the Box under More information, at the end (②). Advisors at the service can give you information and professional support, and they can advise on smoking treatments that may help. Evidence shows that using this type of service gives you the best chance of successfully stopping smoking.

E-cigarettes or vaping

E-cigarettes provide nicotine to the user in the form of a vapour. They don't use tobacco, and they don't produce smoke. Although potentially dangerous chemicals have been found in e-cigarettes, the levels are much lower than in normal cigarettes. So far, the evidence shows that e-cigarettes are far safer than tobacco cigarettes, and they're useful when it comes to giving up smoking.

Passive smoking

Passive smoking, when you breathe in second-hand smoke, is also dangerous. The smoke contains much higher amounts of harmful substances than the smoke breathed in directly, though it is diluted as it mixes with normal air. In confined spaces such as a room or a car, it can be a real problem. If you live with a smoker or spend a lot of time with one, now is a good time to encourage him or her to quit. They could join and support you if you're stopping, or it can be something positive they can do to help if you're a non-smoker.

If you're quitting, you're also helping those around you by cutting down their exposure to second-hand smoke.



More information

As well as information about bladder cancer and treatments, our website has other information sheets that you might find helpful, including sheets about other aspects of healthy living.

Other charities have information on stopping smoking or offer support that may be helpful, too.

- **Cancer Research UK** at www.cancerresearchuk.org/about-cancer/causes-of-cancer/smoking-and-cancer/how-do-i-stop-smoking#:~:text=What's%20the%20best%20way%20to,with%20their%20advice%20and%20support
- **Roy Castle Lung Cancer Foundation** at www.roycastle.org/how-we-help/stop-smoking
- **Macmillan Cancer Support** at www.macmillan.org.uk/cancer-information-and-support/treatment/coping-with-treatment/giving-up-smoking

NHS Choices has a lot of information and advice to help you stop smoking. Go to www.nhs.uk/better-health/quit-smoking/