

# Smiles Better

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## Why you should give up smoking!



So January is over and all those new year resolutions of going to the gym, losing weight, detoxing and giving up smoking have probably not gone as planned or have totally gone out the window!!

As many of my patients know I had been hinting and suggesting that they should give up smoking for the New Year. Many do really well for the first few weeks, but they either have a bad day at work or are out having a drink with friends and the cravings take over and they are back at square one.

None of us are perfect, we all have a bad day whether it is our diet or we give the gym a miss because we're too tired, but the next day we try to be good and get back to it. Smokers usually have a bad day and just give up all together, so this article is for those of you trying to give up or for those who had given up but have failed.

### WHY SHOULD YOU STOP?

Smoking as we know has many risks and side effects, most packets have the health warning 'SMOKING KILLS' or something similar. It's known to increase the risk of heart disease, stroke, respiratory disease and there is an increased risk of lung cancer. Smoking is also a major cause of tooth loss and periodontal disease. Periodontal disease starts as gingivitis, bleeding gums. Smokers usually won't notice any bleeding from the gums as the tobacco smoke constricts blood vessels, making them less likely to bleed. If this goes untreated the gingivitis progresses to

periodontal disease.

This is when the plaque and bacteria build up under the gum and produce toxins which cause a chronic inflammatory infection which break down the ligaments, fibres and bone that holds and supports teeth. In smokers the body's defence mechanisms are weakened, making smokers more susceptible to an infection like periodontal disease.



Smoking interferes with healing, it reduces the delivery of oxygen and nutrients to the gums, making smokers more likely to lose teeth and not respond to treatment for gum disease.

Smoking is also one of the main causes of mouth cancer. Tobacco contains many cancer causing substances such as nitrosamines, tar, hydrocarbons, carbon monoxide, nicotine and ammonia. Whether you inhale or not, each time you smoke your lips, mouth, tongue, throat and larynx are exposed to smoke and it's toxic and cancer causing chemicals. The more you smoke the greater your risk. Nicotine is the chemical that makes smoking so addictive and difficult to give up. There are many products on the market such as chewing gum and patches which can help combat cravings and make giving easier!



### WHAT CAN YOU DO?

So whether you're still smoking or are trying to give up my top tips for preventing or reducing side effects are:

1. Stop smoking!!!! See your GP, Pharmacist or Dentist for advice and help.
  2. Visit your dentist regularly for dental check-ups where your dentist will carry out a soft tissue examination for mouth cancer. They will check for white patches, lumps, ulcers that have not healed and they will check for gum disease
  3. Visit your Hygienist for regularly cleaning to prevent gum disease.
- Smoking also leaves stubborn yellow/

brown stains or your teeth which are difficult to remove; your hygienist will remove these stains and advise you on the best toothpastes and products to reduce staining and to keep your gums healthy.

**Here are some contacts that you may find useful: [www.smokefree.nhs.uk](http://www.smokefree.nhs.uk) [www.smokefree.nhs.uk](http://www.smokefree.nhs.uk) or try the NHS free smoking helpline 0800 022 4332**