

# COVID-19 and smoking in pregnancy

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#QUITFORCOVID



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# COVID-19 and smoking: what we know

- Smokers are more vulnerable to respiratory illness: more likely to pick up, have worse symptoms and take longer to recover
- We don't yet know how similar Covid-19 is. Early evidence indicates that smokers are more likely to develop symptoms and, if hospitalised, more likely to have severe illness
- Smokers will also continue to develop other illnesses which will place a pressure on NHS
- SHS also likely to make people more vulnerable to infection complications
- As a precautionary measure, the government has classed pregnant women as a group at risk of severe illness with COVID-19.



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# COVID and smoking: messages for pregnant women who smoke

- Advice to pregnant smokers remains that they should attempt to quit as soon as possible and seek support from their midwife or through a local stop smoking service.
- Smoking or being exposed to secondhand smoke during pregnancy significantly increases the risk of miscarriage, stillbirth or having a premature or unwell baby
- NRT is safe to use during pregnancy and can increase the chances of quitting successfully, especially when combined with specialist help from local stop smoking services.
- The priority is to be smokefree. If vaping is helping women to manage nicotine withdrawal and stay smokefree, women should be reassured that vaping is much less harmful to themselves and their baby than continuing to smoke and they should continue to vape.



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**“To be clear on smokers, my recommendation is that they stop smoking, if you’re going to give up smoking, this is a very good moment to do it.”**

*Prof Chris Whitty, Chief Medical Officer, 5<sup>th</sup> March 2020*

**“It is abundantly clear that smoking makes the impact of coronavirus worse”**

*Matt Hancock MP, Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, 17th March 2020*

**“Quitting smoking now will bring immediate benefits to your health, reducing the risk of heart and lung problems for you and those around you. That’s good news for smokers and good news for our NHS”**

*Rosanna O’Connor, acting Health Improvement Director, Public Health England*

**“There are so many reasons to quit smoking but never a more important time than right now during the coronavirus pandemic. Emerging evidence suggests that smoking puts people more at risk from severe complications from COVID-19, and the ADPH is supporting efforts to encourage smokers to quit for COVID.”**

*Ruth Tennant, Tobacco lead for the Association of Directors of Public Health*

**“I’m delighted to support the #QuitforCovid campaign. Patients who stop smoking four weeks before an operation have 19% fewer complications & emerging evidence suggests that smoking puts people more at risk of severe complications from COVID-19.”**

*Professor Ravi Mahajan, President of the Royal College of Anaesthetists*



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# Around 300,000 smokers have #QuitforCovid

- Smokers are as motivated as ever to quit.
- Findings from YouGov show that at least 300,000 people have quit smoking, 550,000 have tried to quit and 2.4 million have cut down on the amount they smoke due to growing concerns around coronavirus (COVID-19) and the increased risk smokers face.
- It is vital that support to quit remains available to pregnant smokers.



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# Implications for pregnancy

- There's never been a more important time to support smokers to quit. All pregnant smokers must continue to be given evidence based support to quit.
- Whilst CO monitoring should be paused during this period, NHS England still recommends that all women are asked about their smoking status at antenatal appointments, and time of delivery, and given appropriate advice and support.
- Opt-out referral pathways to specialist support should also remain in place.



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# Implications for pregnancy

- While face-to-face stop smoking services are not operating, consultations are being provided remotely via telephone, video conferencing etc and it's vital this support remains in place.
- Women must still be able to access NRT.
- CO monitoring should be re-introduced as soon as the COVID-19 situation has resolved to a background risk.



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# E-cigarettes/vaping

- Whilst not completely risk free, switching completely to vaping is significantly less harmful than continuing to smoke.
- If vaping is helping pregnant women to manage nicotine withdrawal and stay smokefree, they should be supported to continue vaping.
- Vaping shops not on essential list. Access to liquids and products therefore curtailed.
- See the [Challenge Group website](#) for resources and info on vaping in pregnancy.



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# #QuitforCovid

<https://twitter.com/QuitforCovid>

<https://todayistheday.co.uk/>

For information on the coronavirus outbreak please go to the covid-19 page on [NHS.UK](https://www.nhs.uk) or the information on [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk)

The image shows a screenshot of the #QuitforCovid Twitter profile on the left and a campaign banner on the right. The banner has a purple background with a white brushstroke that says "TODAY IS THE DAY". Below this, it says "Don't smoke alone. Quit together." and "Twitter Quit Clinic 7.30-8.30pm every day". At the bottom of the banner, it says "COVID-19 and smoking What you need to know". The Twitter profile on the left shows the account name "QuitforCovid", bio "Official account for the #QuitforCovid campaign to encourage quitting smoking during the COVID-19 outbreak", and a tweet from 1 hour ago about a video of Ace dropping his smoking habit.

By using Twitter's services you agree to our [Cookies Use](#). We and our partners operate globally and use cookies

- Daily twitter quit clinic 7:30 – 8:30pm. Ask a question on Twitter using the hashtag #QuitforCovid

# Challenge Group resources

- Editable posters for parents and staff with current guidelines, info about what to expect from your midwife, and info about NRT.

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## SMOKING IN PREGNANCY AND COVID-19 Advice for midwives during the coronavirus outbreak

CO monitoring of pregnant women is being paused during the coronavirus outbreak. However, we **must** continue to save babies' lives through supporting smokefree pregnancies.

In light of the temporary suspension of CO monitoring, staff must:

1

**Alert pregnant women that they have been identified as a high-risk group as a precautionary measure by government, and that those who smoke have an increased risk of severe illness from COVID-19.**

2

**Continue to ask those who are pregnant if they smoke or have recently quit. Raise concerns about the impact of smoking and exposure to secondhand smoke on their baby and on themselves.**

3

**Continue to refer all pregnant smokers or those who have recently quit for specialist stop smoking support. Give pregnant smokers confidence that the treatment they need, including behavioural support and medication, will continue to be available during the coronavirus outbreak.**

[Input details about your local stop smoking services or key information that you want to emphasise here. To move this box just drag it to another part of the page.]

For example, in Greater Manchester specialist services will:

- Undertake a telephone/virtual appointment
- If woman engages contract onto Incentive Scheme - offer individual CO monitor to be used with telephone/virtual behavioural support and pharmacotherapy if required as per pathway until birth
- Continue to ask at each antenatal contact if the women have used even a 'single puff' and record smoking status

#QuitforCovid

## SMOKING AND CORONAVIRUS Advice for parents

#QuitForCovid



### How does smoking during pregnancy impact my baby?

Smoking or being exposed to secondhand smoke during pregnancy significantly increases your risk of **miscarriage, stillbirth** or having a **premature or unwell baby**.

Quitting smoking is the most effective way to **protect your child** from the harms of tobacco smoke.



### Does smoking increase my risk from coronavirus?

As a precautionary measure, the government has classed pregnant women as a group at risk of **severe illness** from coronavirus.

Evidence suggests smokers who contract coronavirus are more likely to need **intensive care** than non-smokers.

Smoking damages your lungs and weakens your immune system. This makes it more likely that you will have **complications** if you get sick and **take longer to recover**.



### Can I get help to quit from my midwife?

Yes. Your midwife should:

1. **Provide you with information** about the risks of smoking and benefits of quitting for you and **your baby**.
2. **Refer you** to a specialist stop smoking service. This service can provide you with **support and advice** via telephone/Skype/Facetime and may be able send you **stop smoking medications** and vouchers in the post. They should also be able to give you advice about **using an e-cigarette** to quit smoking.

Find support and local services at: <https://www.nhs.uk/smokefree>



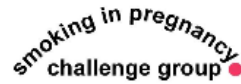
### How can I keep my home smokefree?

You can use **nicotine replacement products** (e.g. patches or gum) or **e-cigarettes** to protect yourself and your family from harmful cigarette smoke.

If you need to smoke you should take **at least 7 steps outside** to stop smoke drifting inside.

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# Challenge Group resources



## Smoking during pregnancy and COVID-19

### Guidance for Local Maternity Systems

Maternity services have made excellent progress in supporting pregnant smokers to quit. As the healthcare service faces unprecedented challenges in keeping patients safe and well, it is vital that support to quit remains available to pregnant smokers.

#### Harms of smoking during pregnancy

Smoking during pregnancy is the leading modifiable risk factor for poor birth outcomes, including stillbirth, miscarriage and pre-term birth.<sup>1</sup> Smoking during pregnancy contributes to increased respiratory conditions among children and the World Health Organization has highlighted that exposure to secondhand smoke is a major cause of bronchitis, pneumonia, coughing and wheezing and asthma attacks in children.<sup>2</sup>

In 2015/16, it's estimated that maternal smoking during pregnancy cost the NHS [over £20 million](#) through 10,032 episodes of admitted patient care.<sup>3</sup>

It is therefore essential, that we continue to provide pregnant smokers with behavioural support and NRT to support quit attempts throughout their pregnancy.

#### Smoking and COVID-19

[Preliminary evidence](#) indicates that smokers who contract the new coronavirus (COVID-19) have more severe symptoms.<sup>4</sup> [One survey from China](#) has found that smokers with COVID-19 are 14 times more likely to develop severe disease.<sup>5</sup> As a precautionary measure, the government has classed pregnant women as a group at risk of severe illness with COVID-19.

It has therefore never been more important for pregnant women to look after their respiratory health, and it is vitally important that we help smokers to quit

Secondhand smoke exposure also elevates risks, so it is important that smokers are supported to maintain a smokefree home and pregnant women are not exposed to secondhand smoke in the home.

#### Referring pregnant smokers to stop smoking services

Whilst CO monitoring should be paused during this period as a precautionary measure, NHS England still recommends that all women are asked about their smoking status at antenatal appointments, and time of delivery, and given appropriate advice and support.<sup>6</sup>

Opt-out referral pathways to specialist support should also remain in place.

CO monitoring should be re-introduced as soon as the COVID-19 situation has resolved to a background risk.

#### Providing specialist stop smoking support to pregnant women

Trusts should continue to provide specialist stop smoking support for pregnant women via telephone or remote systems, in line with the [guidance](#) from the National Centre for Smoking Cessation and Training (NCSCCT).<sup>7</sup> In addition to specialist support, there is further information and advice available to smokers at: [www.todayistheday.co.uk](http://www.todayistheday.co.uk)

- 2-sided guidance for Local Maternity Systems, emphasising the importance of continuing to provide specialist stop smoking support during pregnancy.