[Smokers at greater risk of severe respiratory disease from COVID-19](#)

If you smoke, you are not only putting yourself at greater risk of developing severe disease from the COVID-19 virus, but those around you exposed to second hand smoke, including children, are also put at increased risk.

Smoking tobacco is known to damage the lungs and airways causing a range of severe respiratory problems. The evidence clearly shows COVID-19 virus attacks the respiratory system, which explains why smokers are at greater risk. A small but [highly impactful survey from China](#) finds that smokers with COVID-19 are 14 times more likely to develop severe disease.

In addition, the repetitive hand to mouth movement provides an easy route of entry for the virus, putting smokers at greater risk of contracting COVID-19.

Professor John Newton, Director of Health Improvement at Public Health England said:

> In light of this unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic, there has never been a more important time to stop smoking. Not only for your own health but to protect those around you. It will also help alleviate the huge pressures on the NHS.
>
> It is never too late to quit, no matter your age.

Once smokefree, there are very real health benefits with the body continuing to repair the longer you stay smokefree. The more immediate benefits include:

- after 48 hours carbon monoxide is eliminated from the body. Lungs start to clear out mucus and other smoking debris
- after 72 hours breathing becomes easier as bronchial tubes begin to relax
- after 2 to 12 weeks blood circulation improves, making physical activity like walking and running easier

To help reduce your risk of contracting the virus and developing severe disease from coronavirus, you can use the smokefree app to access advice and support on how you can best stop smoking. Search 'Smokefree'.

Background

Follow the [Smokefree Action Coalition](#) [#quitforcovid](#) campaign on Twitter.