

Surge in smokers trying to quit see increased success rates in 2020

This [Stoptober](#), smokers in England are being encouraged to put their lungs first, strengthen their immune system and breathe easier ahead of flu season by joining more than 2 million smokers who have made a quit attempt since 2012 with the annual campaign.

Smoking damages the lungs and airways and harms the immune system, leaving us more vulnerable to infections, such as flu. Smokers generally have an increased risk of contracting respiratory infections and experiencing more severe symptoms. Stopping smoking brings immediate benefits to health, including for people with an existing smoking-related disease.

[Smoking prevalence among adults in England is at a record low of 13.9%](#). New data from the UCL Smoking Toolkit Study show that in England in 2020 there has been an increase of nearly a quarter (22%) in quit attempts compared to 2019 and an increase of almost two-thirds in the quitting success rate from 14% to 23%, [the highest since at least 2007](#).

Action on Smoking and Health ([ASH](#)) [has calculated that more than a million people in the UK stopped smoking during the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) lockdown](#).

Jo Churchill, Public Health Minister said:

It has never been more important to take care of ourselves, and quitting smoking is a great way to start.

With smoking rates already at an all-time low and 2020 seeing more people stopping than ever, I urge all smokers to join in Stoptober to improve their health and help England become a smoke-free society by 2030.

Scott Crosby, Tobacco Control Programme Manager at Public Health England, said:

2020 has been an unprecedented year for all of us and has reminded us how important our health is.

We are pleased to see that quitting rates have been extremely high so far this year and Stoptober is back to help support England's remaining smokers to join in the national quit attempt.

It is never too late to quit. Even if you have an existing smoking-related condition, stopping smoking brings immediate health benefits.

We know that smoking damages the lungs and weakens the immune system and so now, ahead of flu season, is an ideal time to put your lung health first.

Leading UK health organisations including ASH, British Lung Foundation (BLF), British Heart Foundation (BHF) and Cancer Research UK are joining in the call to get smokers in England to give quitting a go this Stoptober.

Professor Jamie Brown, Director of the UCL Tobacco and Alcohol Research Group and co-author of a living rapid evidence review on smoking and COVID-19, said:

Evidence shows that many more smokers are trying to quit in 2020 and the highest numbers are succeeding since at least 2007.

While the evidence on COVID-19 outcomes for smokers is still developing and remains uncertain, what is clear is that stopping smoking brings rapid improvements in respiratory and cardiovascular health.

Quitting now will not only benefit people's individual health and help improve their lung health ahead of flu season, but it will also help to reduce the demands on the healthcare system in these difficult times.

Stoptober provides the information and support people need to quit smoking for 28 days, based on research that if a smoker can make it to 28 days smokefree, they are 5 times more likely to quit for good.

This year, Stoptober is offering a range of free support tools for those looking to quit, including digital services that are easily accessible for those looking for online support. These tools include the Stoptober app, Facebook messenger bot and online communities, SMS and daily emails. There is also a Personal Quit Plan that helps people find a combination of stop smoking support that's right for them, with options including expert support from local Stop Smoking Services, stop smoking aids and digital tools.

Search 'Stoptober' now for a full range of quitting support options.