Smoking and cancer treatment
Quitting smoking is one of the best things you can do for your health.

You have been diagnosed with cancer, it is now very important that you quit smoking.

You should also avoid other people’s smoke. If your family members or anyone who lives with you smokes, they should quit or at least smoke outside.

It is never too late to quit smoking.

**How will quitting help my cancer treatment?**

- Your cancer may respond better to your treatment.
- You may have fewer side effects from your treatment.
- You will reduce the risk of your cancer progressing.

The benefits of quitting start from day one. Even within 24 hours:

- your blood pressure and pulse rate begin to return to normal;
- there will be more oxygen flowing in your blood; and
- there will be fewer dangerous chemicals in your blood;
Over time you will:

- reduce your chances of developing heart disease. Heart disease could reduce the ability of your body to respond to cancer treatment; and
- reduce your chances of getting another cancer in the future.

What are the benefits of quitting before surgery?

The earlier you quit before your surgery the better. **You will reduce your risk of wound problems or chest infections.**

Chest infections after surgery are more common in smokers. The poisons in tobacco smoke make it harder for the lungs to clear after surgery. This leads to a higher risk of chest infection and pneumonia.

Wounds will heal better and quicker when there is plenty of oxygen in the blood. The carbon monoxide in smoke reduces the level of oxygen in the blood and slows the healing process. The nicotine in tobacco causes narrowing of the blood vessels. This reduces the amount of blood reaching your wound and slows the healing process.
### What are the benefits of quitting before your chemotherapy?

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<th>Benefits</th>
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<tr>
<td>• You will increase your ability to fight infection. Chemotherapy makes you more open to infection.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• You are more likely to respond better to your chemotherapy. Tobacco smoke contains over 4,000 chemicals, including tar. These chemicals can reduce the effect of your chemotherapy.</td>
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### What are the benefits of quitting before your radiotherapy?

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<td>• Within eight hours of quitting, the level of carbon monoxide, a toxic gas inhaled by smoking, will drop and the oxygen level in your body will rise. This will increase your body’s response to radiotherapy treatment.</td>
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<td>• Your energy levels will increase and you will feel fitter as you will be less breathless. When you smoke, carbon monoxide takes the place of oxygen in the body, meaning your heart has to work harder. This makes you feel even more tired than someone who does not smoke.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• You will have a better appetite and a better sense of taste and smell. Smoking can cause loss of appetite, which is also a side effect of radiotherapy. This makes it more difficult for you to keep to your recommended weight.</td>
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Where do I go if I need more advice and support?

You may have tried to quit before. Many smokers try a few times before they quit for good.

Getting help and support increases your chances of success.

You can:

- talk to your doctor or nurse or anyone who is looking after you in hospital about quitting.

- visit www.quit.ie for information or go to the HSE quit Facebook page, www.facebook.com/HSEquit for support. You can sign up for the online Quit Plan, which will guide you through the quitting process day by day.

- call the National Smokers’ Quitline on 1850 201 203, Monday to Saturday, 8am to 10pm for one-to-one personal support and for information on how to get in touch with HSE Smoking Cessation Services (free of charge) near you.

- ask your GP, nurse or pharmacist for advice about quitting.