

# E-cigarettes

**This leaflet explains more about electronic cigarettes, also known as e-cigarettes. If you have any further questions, please speak to your local stop smoking service.**

## What are e-cigarettes?

E-cigarettes are electrical devices that mimic real cigarettes by producing a vapour that's potentially less harmful than tobacco smoke. Many e-cigarettes contain nicotine and, when they do, it's the vapour that gives the nicotine hit.

## Are e-cigarettes safe?

According to NHS Choices, while e-cigarettes may be safer than conventional cigarettes, we don't yet know their long-term effects on the body.

### Potential drawbacks to using e-cigarettes

- They are not currently regulated as medicines so you can't be sure of their ingredients or how much nicotine they contain – despite what the label might say.
- The amount of nicotine you get from an e-cigarette can change over time and be different within the same brand.
- They aren't proven as safe. In fact, some e-cigarettes have been tested by local authority trading standards departments and been found to contain toxic chemicals, including some of the same cancer-causing agents produced from tobacco smoking.
- They should not be used in pregnancy.
- So far, there's no proof that they can help people to stop smoking.

### Are there any other risks?

There have been reports of other risks caused by e-cigarettes:

- House fires – e-cigarette batteries need to be recharged, either from a mains connection or with a computer USB port. Some e-cigarettes have overheated and exploded, causing a fire. It is very important that you do not leave an e-cigarette unattended or on charge for a long period of time, for example, overnight.

## Stopping smoking

Stopping smoking is not always easy and can take a few attempts. There are lots of ways to quit smoking but it is about finding the way that works for you. With your free local service on your side, you are **up to four times more likely to quit** for good.

Delivered by professionals, your local NHS stop smoking service will provide advice, support and encouragement to help you stop smoking for good, and is completely free of charge. Everyone is different so there are different support options available, including local pharmacies and GP practices.

If you want to quit using e-cigarettes, your stop smoking service can provide advice and friendly support **but will not be able to supply e-cigarettes**. E-cigarettes do not get rid of the habit or addiction of smoking and you could be using one for a long time without any support or advice. **So why not make it easier? Contact your local stop smoking service for evidence-based support and medication.**

## Where can I get free support?

Call us for more information on services available in Lambeth and Southwark to help you quit for good.

### Lambeth:

t: 0800 856 3409 / 020 3049 5791

e: [gst-tr.stopsmokinglambeth@nhs.net](mailto:gst-tr.stopsmokinglambeth@nhs.net)

### Southwark:

t: 0800 169 6002 / 020 7525 0327

e: [gst-tr.stopsmokingsouthwark@nhs.net](mailto:gst-tr.stopsmokingsouthwark@nhs.net)

[www.gosmokefree.nhs.uk](http://www.gosmokefree.nhs.uk)

**From Friday 19 June 2015, patients and visitors will no longer be permitted to smoke anywhere on Guy's and St Thomas' hospital and community premises. This includes e-cigarettes.**

### Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

To make comments or raise concerns about the Trust's services, please contact PALS. Ask a member of staff to direct you to the PALS office or:

e: 020 7188 8801 at St Thomas' t: 020 7188 8803 at Guy's e: [pals@gstt.nhs.uk](mailto:pals@gstt.nhs.uk)

### Language Support Services

If you need an interpreter or information about your care in a different language or format, please get in touch using the following contact details.

t: 020 7188 8815 fax: 020 7188 5953

### NHS Choices

Provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make choices about your health.

w: [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

### Become a member of your local hospitals, and help shape our future

Membership is free and it is completely up to you how much you get involved. To become a member of our Foundation Trust, you need to be 18 years of age or over, live in Lambeth, Southwark, Lewisham, Wandsworth or Westminster or have been a patient at either hospital in the last five years.

To join, please call 0848 143 4017, email [members@gstt.nhs.uk](mailto:members@gstt.nhs.uk) or visit [www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk](http://www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk)

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