

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 is less harmful than tobacco smoke. Many e-cigarettes contain nicotine and, when they do, it's the vapour that gives the nicotine hit. E-cigarettes can be used to reduce or replace smoking.

Are e-cigarettes safe?

There is ongoing research and Public Health England suggests that e-cigarettes are about 95% safer than smoking tobacco. The Royal College of Midwives have also said that for pregnant women they are much safer for the mother and baby than continuing to smoke. However, we do not yet know their long-term effects.

Potential drawbacks to using e-cigarettes

- They are not currently licensed as medicines and so are not available on prescription.
- 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.
- 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. Research has found that e-cigarettes can help you give up smoking, so you may want to try them. They're most effective if used with support from an NHS stop smoking service.

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**. However they will be able to also prescribe nicotine replacement therapies to reinforce the e-cigarette you choose to use.

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

Southwark

t: 0800 169 6002 / 020 7525 0327

e: gst-tr.stopsmokingsouthwark@nhs.net

Stop Smoking London

t: 0300 123 1044

w: www.nhs.uk/smokefree

w: www.stopsmokinglondon.com

For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit **w:** www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/leaflets

Patients and visitors are not permitted to smoke anywhere on Guy's and St Thomas' hospital and community premises. This includes e-cigarettes. However, inpatients will be offered nicotine replacement therapy while they are admitted to the hospital to help ease withdrawal symptoms.

Your comments and concerns

For advice, support or to raise a concern, contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS). To make a complaint, contact the complaints department.

t: 020 7188 8801 (PALS) **e:** pals@gstt.nhs.uk

t: 020 7188 3514 (complaints) **e:** complaints2@gstt.nhs.uk

Language and accessible support services

If you need an interpreter or information about your care in a different language or format, please get in touch. **t:** 020 7188 8815 **e:** languagesupport@gstt.nhs.uk

NHS website

Online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you take control of your health and wellbeing. **w:** www.nhs.uk

Was this leaflet useful?

We want to make sure the information you receive is helpful to you. If you have any comments about this leaflet, we would be happy to hear from you. Fill in our simple online form, **w:** www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/leaflets, or **e:** patientinformationteam@gstt.nhs.uk

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