

Use of Nicotine Replacement Therapy during Pregnancy

- Smoking tobacco delivers nicotine to the smoker. It is unfortunately a 'dirty' delivery system.
- Nicotine replacement therapy also delivers nicotine to the smoker but without the carbon monoxide, tar and over 4000 other chemicals.
- If an individual pregnant smoker is unable to stop smoking without the assistance of Nicotine Replacement Therapy it is considered safer for the mother and the baby to use NRT than to continue smoking.
- NRT is not a magic cure but it can help to relieve the uncomfortable withdrawal symptoms often associated with stopping smoking.
- Together with specialist support, help and advice on choosing the correct product, quitting smoking for good is a real possibility.
- NRT is usually used over a period of 2 to 3 months gradually reducing the level.
- NRT should **NOT** be used if you choose to continue to smoke.

If you would like any further information on the **FREE help, advice and support** that is available to you during your pregnancy please ask your Midwife, Health Visitor, Practice Nurse or GP to refer you onto the Pregnancy Stop Smoking Service.

Immediate benefits of quitting smoking whilst pregnant

There can be few better times to stop smoking than when you are pregnant both for yourself and for your baby.

- Reduced risk of Ectopic pregnancy
- Reduced risk of miscarriage
- Reduced risk of morning sickness
- Increased energy level
- Reduced risk of complications during the birth of the baby
- Reduced risk of premature birth
- Reduced risk of stillbirth
- Reduced risk of underweight baby
- Reduced risk of an irritable baby as it experiences nicotine withdrawal symptoms
- Reduced risk of cot death
- Reduced risk of respiratory difficulties at birth with continuing problems of wheezing, coughs, chest infections
- More money in your pocket!!

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Birmingham Women's 
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Birmingham Community 
Healthcare
NHS Trust

Risks of Smoking in Pregnancy

Routine Antenatal Carbon Monoxide Recording



Patient Information Leaflet

Risks of Smoking during Pregnancy

Smoking is the single greatest cause of ill health and premature death in the UK today

There is now strong evidence to show that smoking during pregnancy is linked with major adverse health problems for both the mother and her unborn baby.

The risks of an ectopic pregnancy, bleeding during pregnancy, premature detachment of the placenta, and miscarriage can be reduced if the pregnant woman stops smoking during pregnancy.



The risks of premature birth, low birth weight, still birth and sudden infant death syndrome (cot death) are also reduced if the pregnant woman stops smoking during pregnancy.

It may be difficult to stop smoking but it is not impossible - do it for yourself and for your baby

What is Carbon Monoxide?

- Carbon monoxide is a poisonous gas.
- It is released from motor vehicle exhausts, faulty gas appliances and tobacco smoke.
- You can't see it, taste it or smell it.
- Symptoms of mild poisoning are headaches, tiredness and nausea (flu-like symptoms).
- Severe poisoning causes coma and death.
- Carbon monoxide reduces the level of oxygen carried by the red blood cells - resulting in the blood becoming thicker and stickier and more likely to clot.
- It also damages the lining of the artery walls - resulting in narrowing and hardening of the artery.
- The foetus is exposed to almost twice the level of carbon monoxide than the mother.
- The resulting lower oxygen level to the foetus can compromise the baby's growth and development.



How is Carbon Monoxide measured?

- Carbon Monoxide can be measured on a very simple exhaled breath test.
- You take a breath in and hold it for a few seconds to allow the exchange of gasses in the lungs.
- You then blow out slowly into a Carbon Monoxide monitor for as long as you can comfortably do so.
- The reading will show how much Carbon Monoxide is present in your body.
- As a non smoker you would expect a recording of below 5ppm - a green light will show on the monitor.



Carbon Monoxide Monitors