



MARCH 2005

No Smoking Day – Wednesday, 9 March, 2005

What's in a cigarette?

Well about 4,000 chemicals and that's just to to start with

Did you know that there are about 4,000 chemicals in tobacco smoke? Ranging from Tar and Acetone to Arsenic and Formaldehyde. Many are poisonous and many of them cause cancer. What's more, did you know that if you're a smoker, your chances of dying from cancer are 3 times greater than a non-smoker and you are twice as likely to have a heart attack? The message from the UK's Community Pharmacists is "Don't wait until it's too late to quit! Learn the facts about smoking today".*

The risks to health of smoking are now widely recognised and the Government has recently set up a comprehensive NHS Stop Smoking Service, outlined in their "Smoking Kills" White Paper. Services are now available across the NHS in England, providing counselling and support to smokers wanting to quit, complementing the use of stop smoking aids such as Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT). Most stop smoking advisers are pharmacists or nurses and all have received training for this

specific role. The Government has even made some stop smoking aids available on NHS prescription.

John D'Arcy, Chief Executive of The National Pharmaceutical Association (NPA) who represents the nation's community pharmacists comments: "As health professionals, we are not without sympathy for the smoker who wants to give up but finds it difficult. If you know someone who smokes and want to help them stop, suggest they have a chat with their local pharmacist. You can talk to your local pharmacist about any aspect of stopping smoking, not just the products that can help. However, your pharmacist is the best person to advise about Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT) which has certainly helped a lot of people to stop smoking. Of course, it's not a magic cure, you need willpower too – but there is evidence to show that it can *double* your chances of being able to *quit successfully*, provided it's used correctly."

NRT works by gradually weaning you off nicotine, while you concentrate on breaking your smoking habits. It comes in different strengths and is available in: patches; gums; nasal sprays; tablets; inhalators and lozenges. People who find they need something to do with their hands often find an inhalator suits them best; others who need help controlling withdrawal symptoms sometimes benefit more from using a patch or gum. Your pharmacist can advise on how to use these NRT products properly and help you decide which one might be suitable for you.

The good news is that with practical advice, effective products and ongoing support from your local pharmacist – giving up *is* possible. By speaking with your pharmacist

you can talk through your NRT options and establish a programme that will best increase your chances of quitting smoking. John D'Arcy adds: "If you are a smoker, why not consider making the decision to go 'smoke-free' on National No Smoking Day – Wednesday, 9 March, 2005 (www.nosmokingday.org.uk, www.ash.org.uk) This could be the event that transforms you into a former smoker – and leads the way to a healthier lifestyle".

Ask Your Pharmacist – You'll be taking good advice !
Your local pharmacist – helping you stay fit and healthy for 2005

Notes to editors

1. The National Pharmaceutical Association (NPA) is the trade association that represents the professional and commercial interests of the owners of around 11,000 community pharmacies in the United Kingdom.
2. * Don't wait until it's too late to quit. Learn the facts about smoking.
 - Cigarette smoking is strongly linked to chronic bronchitis and emphysema.
 - Pregnant women who smoke increase their risk of having a stillborn or low weight birth infant.
 - Cigarette smoke is harmful to everyone who inhales it, including those who do not smoke themselves.
 - Children of smokers are twice as likely to pick up the habit when they get older.
3. If you would like to arrange a media interview with a pharmacist local to your area, please contact the Press Office on 01727 858687 Exts 3311, 3227 or 3265. Alternatively, you can e-mail us at press.office@npa.co.uk .

www.askyourpharmacist.co.uk
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