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Media release

Quit for COVID: There's never been a more important time for smokers to quit

Smokers in Surrey are being urged to quit to reduce the risks of severe symptoms if they get COVID-19.

NHS Surrey Heartlands CCG is backing the national #QuitforCovid campaign and is joining calls from Public Health England and the Chief Medical Officer for smokers to try to quit to protect themselves and others.

Smoking tobacco damages the lungs, weakens the immune system and causes a range of severe respiratory problems. Evidence so far suggests people who smoke may be at increased risk of severe disease if they get COVID-19.

Dr Charlotte Canniff, NHS Surrey Heartlands CCG Clinical Chair says: "Whilst this is a worrying time for all of us, we are all conscious of the need to protect ourselves and others around us. Quitting smoking is a very good way to reduce the chances you'll develop complications from COVID-19 infection.

"It is never too late to see the health benefits of quitting smoking and you're never too old to quit. Even if you've tried before and didn't manage, don't give up on quitting because you can do it. Many smokers try several times before they succeed. Evidence shows getting the right support and using stop smoking aids to help ease the cravings gives you a much better chance of success."

Ruth Hutchinson, Interim Director of Public Health at Surrey County Council, added: "Quitting smoking is one of the best things smokers can do to protect their own health, the health of those around them and to minimise the impact of coronavirus. It is vital we all do what we can to stay safe and healthy during this outbreak. The One You Surrey stop smoking service is ready to support our residents with specialist stop smoking support."

As well as reducing the risks from complications from coronavirus, quitting smoking quickly improves your circulation and your breathing. It also reduces the risks of other health problems such as heart attacks and strokes. In the longer term quitting is also linked to reduced depression, anxiety, and stress and improved positive mood and quality of life compared with continuing to smoke.

The stop smoking service, One You Surrey offers stop smoking telephone support to existing and new patients.

- Call: 01737 652168
- Visit: www.oneyousurrey.org.uk and click 'Get started'
- Text: 07494 681070

For more information on giving up smoking visit: www.healthysurrey.org.uk/smoking

Once smoke free, health benefits include:

- After 8 hours carbon monoxide levels in blood reduce by more than half and oxygen levels return to normal.
- After 48 hours carbon monoxide is eliminated from the body. Lungs start to clear out mucus and other smoking debris
- After 72 hours breathing becomes easier as bronchial tubes begin to relax
- After 2 to 12 weeks lung function and blood circulation starts to improve, making physical activity like walking and running easier
- After 3 to 9 months any coughs, wheezing or breathing problems will be improving as your lung function increases further.

ENDS

For more information please contact the Press Office on 07825 946551.

Note to editors

About Surrey Heartlands CCG

Surrey Heartlands CCG is the merged Clinical Commissioning Group which formed in April 2020 combining East Surrey, Guildford and Waverley, North West Surrey and Surrey Downs Clinical Commissioning Groups. The CCG is part of the [Surrey Heartlands Health and Care Partnership](#), which covers a population of over one million people.