



Public Health
England

Protecting and improving the nation's health

Healthmatters Tobacco standard packs – seizing the moment to support smokers to quit





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1. What is standardised packaging?

Standard packs are beginning to appear in England, with the first packs reported to have hit the shelves in August 2016.

By May 2017, all cigarettes and hand rolling tobacco sold in the UK will appear in standard packs. They will no longer be allowed to be sold in brightly coloured, glamorous, stylish packs.

The standardised packaging regulations came into effect from 20 May 2016 after MPs voted in favour of introducing plain, standard cigarette packs by 367 to 113.

Australia was the first country in the world to require cigarettes to be sold in standardised packaging when they introduced it in December 2012.

The new standard pack



20 Cigarette packets must be cuboid in shape and contain a minimum of 20 cigarettes



Prohibition of all other trademarks, logos, colour schemes and graphics

Pantone 448C

The only colour permitted is Pantone 448C which has been voted the least appealing colour



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2. Preventing the next generation of smokers

Cigarette packs are the last advertising medium for tobacco companies to sell the 'personality' of their brand to consumers.

There is very strong evidence that exposure to tobacco advertising and promotion increases the likelihood of children and young people taking up smoking.

An independent review into standardised packaging, commissioned by the UK government, concluded that it is highly likely that standardised packaging would serve to reduce the rate of children taking up smoking.

The data from Australia indicate that standardised packaging is helping to reduce smoking uptake among young people.

Real world evidence for standard packs

Australia has seen:

fewer young people taking up smoking

a decline in children's exposure to secondhand smoke

an accelerated decline in smoking prevalence

no evidence of increases in use of illicit or contraband cigarettes

a reduction in the volume of tobacco sales

a decline in household expenditure on tobacco





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3. Seize the moment

Research has shown that compared with smokers smoking from branded packs, smokers who were smoking from the plain packs were more likely to think about and prioritise quitting.

This has been borne out by the introduction of standard packs in Australia. Calls to the smoking cessation Quitline in New South Wales increased by 78% following the introduction of standard packs.

Health professionals and local authorities need to be ready to make the most of this opportunity to boost quitting rates in their populations.

Currently, there are over 7 million adults who smoke in England but the majority do want to quit.

Impact of standard packs on smokers in Australia

78%
increase

in calls to
the smoking
cessation
Quitline in New
South Wales,
following the
introduction of
standardised
packs

Smokers started to:

find their
cigarettes
less
appealing



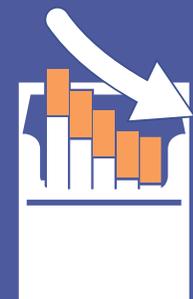
hide their
packs
in social
situations



smoke less
in outdoor
restaurants,
bars and
cafes



smoke
fewer
cigarettes
overall





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4. Quitting smoking

Local stop smoking services offer the best chance of success. A combination of behavioural and pharmacological support is up to 4 times more effective than no help or over the counter nicotine replacement therapy (NRT).

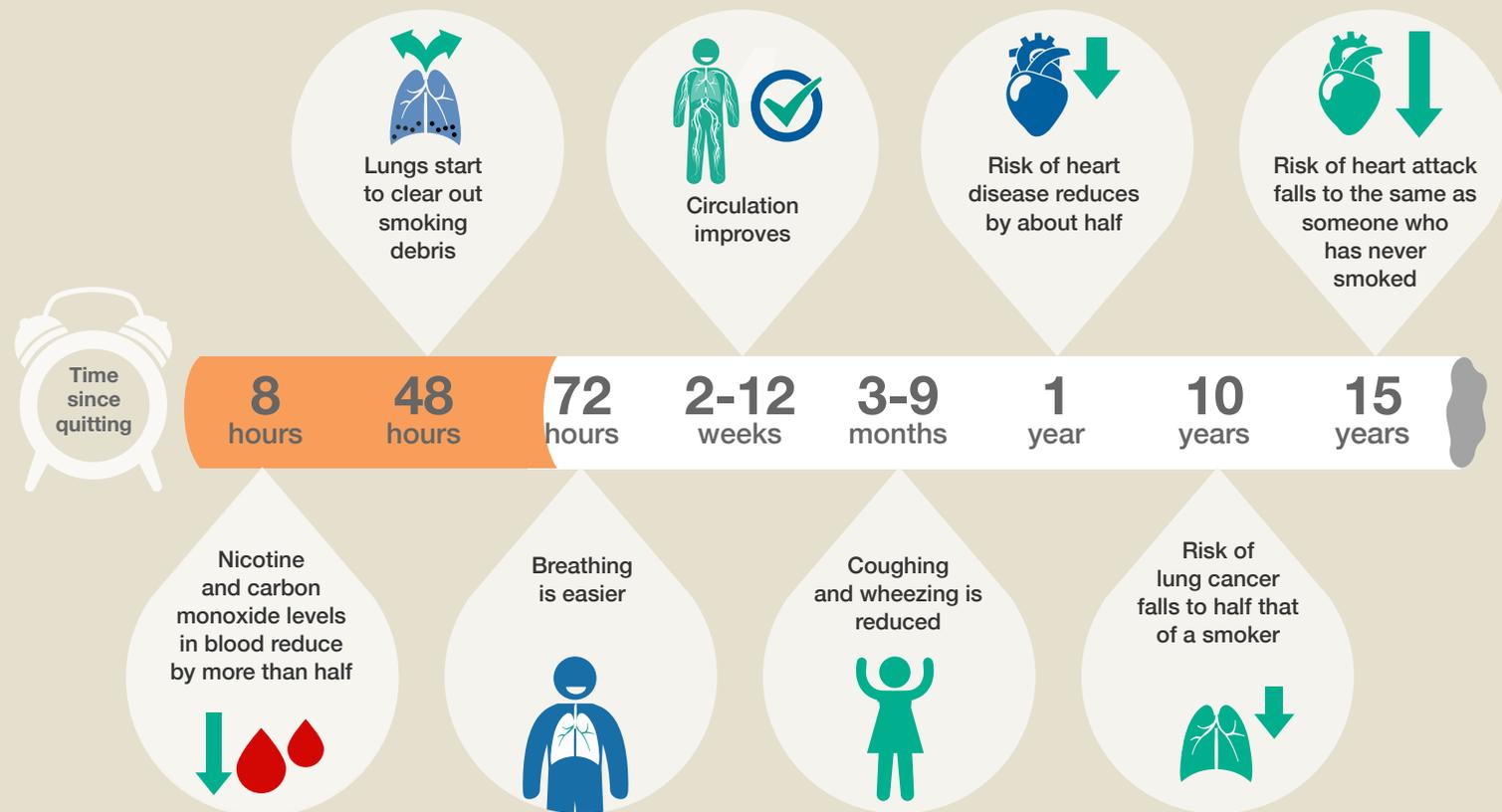
The most common quitting aids used in England in 2016 are:

1. E-cigarettes
2. NRT over the counter
3. NRT on prescription
4. Varenicline (Champix)
5. Behavioural support

Smoking is concentrated in disadvantaged communities and groups. Support for quitting smoking should be targeted to reach those who need it most.

Smoking costs the NHS in England £2bn a year. Supporting smokers to quit results in a reduced burden on the healthcare system and wider society.

The health benefits of quitting It's never too late to quit





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5. Exploit every opportunity to help smokers quit

PHE believes that standardised packaging will make an invaluable contribution to achieving a tobacco free generation by 2025.

As a powerful addition to the existing levers currently available, standardised packaging could be the game changer in helping to prevent future generations from taking up smoking.

As the evidence in Australia shows, the introduction of standard packs also offers a crucial window of opportunity to engage with smokers and encourage more people to quit.

The majority of smokers want to quit and now is the time for concerted and collaborative action.

Call to action

Most smokers want to give up and now is the time for concerted and collaborative action



Pharmacists

Pharmacists can advise on how to stop smoking and provide information on the range of available medication

Primary care

GPs should, as a matter of routine, make every contact count and identify smokers and offer smoking cessation interventions

Local authorities

Local authorities should commission interventions including stop smoking services to meet the identified needs of their populations

Secondary care

Hospitals, mental health services and maternity units should become completely smokefree and all patients who smoke should be helped to stop for good

