

Raising awareness of lung cancer symptoms

Lung cancer is more common among smokers, but non-smokers can also develop the disease. It's important to know the signs and symptoms. If you smoke, think about quitting, no matter how long you have been smoking.

Signs and symptoms

Using other types of tobacco products such as cigars, pipe tobacco and chewing tobacco can also increase your risk of developing cancer.

Every year that you don't smoke, your risk of getting serious illnesses such as lung cancer will decrease.

Early detection and diagnosis of lung cancer is important, as treatment can be more effective and chances of survival can be improved. Symptoms may include:

- a persistent cough
- a sudden change in a cough that you have had for a long time
- unexplained weight loss
- breathlessness
- chest pain – this is usually intermittent (stop-start) and is often made worse when breathing or coughing
- coughing up blood-stained phlegm

You should always visit [your GP](#) urgently if you experience any of the symptoms listed above, even if you don't smoke. Around 12 per cent of people with lung cancer have never smoked.

You can find out more, including other signs and symptoms, on the [lung cancer page](#).

Quitting smoking

It is never too late to stop smoking, but the earlier you stop, the better. Smokers who stop for 28 days or more are five times more likely to stop for good.

However, it is not easy and different approaches will work for different people. While some people might be able to do it with very little support, others find that planning ahead and making use of the free stop smoking services that are available can really help them make the decision permanent.

You can get more information at the link below:

If you quit and then start smoking again, accept it, work out why it

happened, and focus on how you can avoid it in the future.

It takes several efforts for many people to quit for good, but if you are determined, you will do it.

More useful links

[Think about fitting a carbon monoxide alarm](#)

Have you thought about getting an audible carbon monoxide alarm for your home? You can be particularly at risk from carbon monoxide poisoning when you're asleep, because you may not be aware of the symptoms until it's too late. An alarm could save your life.

Instant warning

An alarm is a useful precaution. You should always ensure your fuel-burning appliances are properly installed and maintained.

It is now compulsory for all new homes in Northern Ireland to have a carbon monoxide alarm installed.

Audible alarms give an instant warning of dangerous carbon monoxide levels. The use of 'black spot labels/ cards' is not recommended.

You can find out more about the symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning at the page below:

But alarms must not be regarded as a substitute for proper installation and maintenance of your fossil fuel-burning appliances.

Audible alarms

Audible carbon monoxide alarms come in many varieties and are manufactured by a wide range of companies.

They are sold online and in many shops, including DIY/ hardware stores, supermarkets and trade retail stores.

What to look for when buying an alarm

Before buying a carbon monoxide alarm, always ensure it complies with British Standard EN 50291 and carries a British or European approval mark, such as a

CE or Kitemark.

Carbon monoxide alarms should be installed, checked and serviced in line with the manufacturer's instructions.

Particular attention should be made of the lifespan of the alarm, which can range from one to six years dependent on the manufacturer and the expected lifespan of the batteries. Some have replaceable/ removable units, while others are sealed in for the life of the unit.

Where to fit an alarm

Always read the manufacturers instructions for the correct and safe location for installation of the alarm. It's not possible to give specific guidance on the exact location of a detector(s) which suits all types of premises and their usage.

Carbon monoxide is slightly lighter than air, therefore fitting carbon monoxide detectors at a low level is not recommended.

Once the alarm is fitted

Routine procedures recommended by the manufacturer (including testing) should be in the instructions supplied with the alarm and should always be followed.

Any detectors failing a routine test should be returned to the installer or supplier, or be replaced.

Never cover or paint over alarms once installed.

Always test your carbon monoxide alarm to the manufacturer's instructions.

More useful links

[Cold weather health advice and keeping neighbours in mind](#)

It's important to keep warm to stay as healthy as possible during the colder winter months. If you have an elderly or vulnerable friend or neighbour, look out for them to make sure they are safe, warm and well.

Precautions to take

Colder weather can cause a range of health problems but you can be ready for

them.

[Keeping warm](#) is important – always keep the main rooms in your home, such as the living room and bedroom, heated. Warm clothing and a hot meal can also help prevent the most vulnerable people falling ill this winter.

It can help prevent colds, [flu](#) or more serious health conditions such as heart attacks, strokes, pneumonia, and depression.

Also, anyone who is invited to get the [flu vaccination](#) should do so.

There are a few easy precautions you can take to keep you and your loved ones safe during a spell of particularly cold weather:

- wear warm clothes – layers are best, including a hat
- if outside in icy conditions, wear boots or shoes with suitable grips
- make sure you have enough food and medicines
- check the weather forecast regularly
- take care outdoors, especially if roads and pavements are icy
- take regular hot drinks and food
- heat all rooms used during the day – living room to around 18-21°C (65-70°F) and the rest of your house to at least 16°C (61°F)
- if you can't heat all your rooms, make sure that you keep one room warm throughout the day
- if you use an electric blanket check what type it is – some are designed only to warm the bed before you get in and should not be used throughout the night
- never use an electric blanket and hot water bottle together as it could cause electrocution
- service boilers and appliances annually by a registered engineer to protect from the [dangers of carbon monoxide](#)
- keep in contact with trusted callers, friends and relatives should you need help and keep your mobile phone charged

You should also find useful information and advice on the following pages:

If you are worried during the winter and need help, contact or speak to a friend, relative, trusted caller or health professional. They will make sure that your needs or concerns are brought to the attention of someone who can help.

Using the health service

Should you or someone in your family become unwell this winter, think carefully about how to use health services.

Emergency and 999 services are for life-threatening and serious conditions.

Emergency Departments are the right place to go if you're injured or think you or a loved one is seriously ill.

The [A to Z symptom checker](#), pharmacist, minor injury unit, GP, and out-of-

hours services are available for any other health concerns you may have.

If you get a repeat prescription, leave yourself enough time to order and collect it in advance from your GP.

More useful links

[Consider joining NIE Networks and NI Water care registers](#)

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Older people and people with a medical condition or disability should consider joining the NI Water and Northern Ireland Electricity (NIE) Networks care registers. The registers help to identify people who need extra help or support if there is an interruption to supply.

NI Water Customer Care Register

People who join the [NI Water](#) Customer Care Register can get a range of free additional services if they are an older person, have a serious medical condition, or need extra help for any other reason.

The full range of services provided to people on the register is outlined at the following link:

You can join the register by phone:

NIE Networks Critical Care Register

[NIE Networks](#) offers a critical care information service to people who are dependent on life-supporting electrical equipment.

Anyone on this register will receive up-to-date information by phone during a power cut or a planned interruption of supply.

You can find out more, including how to register, at this link:

Details of a relative, neighbour or friend can also be given to NIE Networks as an alternative contact.

More useful links

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Slow down and stay safer on the road

Going too fast for the conditions is the number one cause of people being killed or seriously injured on our roads. Drivers and riders are urged to slow down.

Speeding is no accident

Driving or riding too fast is no accident, it's a decision to drive faster than road and traffic conditions allow. It is also a decision to drive beyond your capabilities.

Unfortunately if you have an accident when driving too fast, you are much less likely to walk away from it unscathed.

[Speed limits](#) are set as an absolute maximum – the weather and conditions need to be taken into consideration when driving on any road.

Speed does not need to be high to kill or seriously injure.

Keeping safe

We all have a personal responsibility to drive or ride in a way that keeps ourselves and others safe.

Every one mph reduction in average speeds causes, on average, a five percent reduction in collisions. This could be the difference between life and death.

Everyone shares the responsibility to prevent deaths and injuries.

Drivers and riders need to:

- slow down
- pay greater attention to their surroundings
- never drive or ride a motorbike after drinking or taking drugs

Whether you're a driver or passenger, always wear a seatbelt.

Pedestrians and cyclists also need to:

- be aware of their surroundings
- make every effort to be seen by wearing reflective or hi-vis clothing

You can get more information about road safety at the page below:

The faster the speed, the bigger the mess. Please slow down – one life lost is one too many.

It is better to arrive late and alive, than to not arrive at all.

More useful links

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