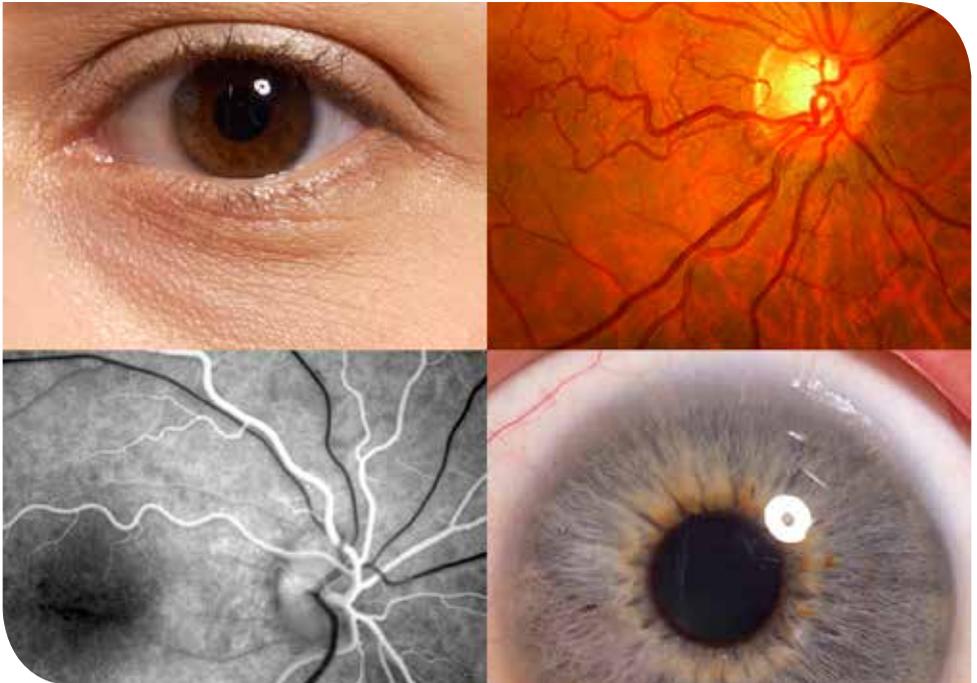


# Smoking and eyes

Eye Department



Patient information leaflet

## The effect of smoking on the eyes

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- Noxious particles present in tobacco smoke act as **irritants to the conjunctiva**.
- Vasoactive components in smoke can lead to **acute constriction of the ciliary arteries, reduction in choroidal blood flow and ischemic optic neuropathy**.
- Nicotine and CO<sub>2</sub> accelerate **atherosclerosis and interfere with lipid homeostasis**, increasing platelet aggregation and inducing blood clotting. If these processes affect the ophthalmic branch of the carotid vasculature, this may also cause ocular ischemic episodes.
- Tobacco smoke contains free radicals that reduce the presence of protective antioxidants and can cause oxidative damage to the retina.
- Heavy metals such as **cadmium, lead and copper found in tobacco smoke can accumulate in the lens**.
- **Age related macular degeneration** (2 to 3.5 times increase in risk)
- **Graves ophthalmology** – the disease severity is positively associated with the number of cigarettes smoked per day.
- **Age-related cataracts**. Smoking is particularly associated with cortical and nuclear cataracts.
- **Anterior ischemic optic neuropathy**.
- There is some evidence that smoking may increase the risk of **primary open-angle glaucoma and mixed evidence regarding the involvement of smoking in diabetic retinopathy**.

## Why discuss smoking in the eye clinic?

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- You are ideally placed to be given information about treatment options, support through withdrawal and signposted to specialist services.
- Abstaining from smoking at this time can lead to significant health benefits.
- 70% of smokers want to stop smoking but need help to do so.

## Useful sources of information

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- **Action on Smoking and Health (ASH):**  
[www.ash.org.uk](http://www.ash.org.uk)
- **NHS Smoke free:**  
[www.nhs.uk/smokefree](http://www.nhs.uk/smokefree)
- **NHS Choices Stop Smoking website:**  
[www.nhs.uk/livewell/smoking/Pages/stopsmokingnewhome.aspx](http://www.nhs.uk/livewell/smoking/Pages/stopsmokingnewhome.aspx)
- **BTS Smoking Cessation information:**  
[www.brit-thoracic.org.uk/clinical-information/smoking-cessation](http://www.brit-thoracic.org.uk/clinical-information/smoking-cessation)
- **Surrey Stop Smoking Team:**  
[www.healthysurrey.org.uk/your-health/smoking/](http://www.healthysurrey.org.uk/your-health/smoking/)

## References

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This information has been compiled from 'The Clinical case for providing stop smoking support to Ophthalmology Patients' – [www.ncsct.co.uk/usr/pub/ophthalmology.pdf](http://www.ncsct.co.uk/usr/pub/ophthalmology.pdf)

## Contact details

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### Eye Department

**Telephone:** 01483 571122 **ext** 4498 / 4648 (Monday–Friday, 9am–5pm)

Or 01483 571122 and ask for the on call eye doctor.

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### PALS and Advocacy contact details

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Contact details of independent advocacy services can be provided by our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) who are located on the right hand side as you enter the main reception area. PALS are also your first point of contact for health related issues, questions or concerns surrounding RSCH patient services.

**Telephone:** 01483 402757

**Email:** [rsc-tr.pals@nhs.net](mailto:rsc-tr.pals@nhs.net)

**Opening hours:** 9.00am–3.00pm, Monday to Friday

If you would like information documents in large print, on tape or in another language or form please contact PALS.

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