

Quitting smoking can affect the medicines you are taking

This information sheet will help you understand more about how quitting smoking may affect medicines you are taking. It is not a substitute for talking with your doctor, nurse or pharmacist.

If you stop smoking, the amount (dose) of some medicines may need to be reduced. Smoking cigarettes increases the rate at which your liver removes some medicines from your body. When you stop smoking, the amount of medicine in your body may be higher than when you smoked. This can increase your chance of having a side effect.

How does stopping smoking affect the medicines I am taking?

Your liver is responsible for processing (metabolising) food and medicines. For example, you may notice after quitting smoking that coffee and tea have a stronger effect than before you stopped smoking.

Medicines are metabolised in the liver by enzymes known as cytochrome P450s (CYP 450s). When you smoke, your liver using CYP 450 enzymes removes some medicines faster than in people who don't smoke. This means that smokers may require higher doses of some medicines.

When you stop smoking the liver enzymes slow down and the amount of medicine in your body can go up. This can increase the risk of experiencing a side effect to the medicine.

For most medicines this is not usually a problem but there are some medicines you will need to be careful with.

Which medicines may be affected when I stop smoking?

Table 1 lists some medicines that may need a change in dose. However, the list does not include all medicines that may be affected by smoking.

Before you quit, please discuss with your doctor, nurse or pharmacist about whether your medicine dose should be adjusted. This way you can make a plan to make changes safely.

Table 1: Medicines that may be affected by stopping smoking (this list is not exhaustive)

Medicines	
Clozapine	Verapamil
Olanzapine	Propranolol
Theophylline	Diazepam
Warfarin	Naratriptan
Caffeine	Fluvoxamine
Lamotrigine	

What if I use nicotine replacement therapy?

Using nicotine replacement therapy does not affect the processing of medicines by your liver, like smoking does. This is because the effect on enzymes is not related to nicotine. However, you may still need to change the dose of your medicine.

Where can I find more information about my medicines?

Talk to your doctor, nurse or pharmacist. You can also find more information in the consumer medicine information leaflet for the medicine(s) you are taking: www.medsafe.govt.nz/consumers/cmi/cmiform.asp

