



Saints Successfully Quitting Smoking

St Helena's Smoking Cessation appointments started from July 2018 to advise, support and help Island smokers who would like to quit and successfully become smoke free. The opportunity to have a free four-week course of a Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT) to help quit also started from 1 July 2018, alongside expert Pharmacist advice. Over 60 smokers on-Island have now taken up the offer.

One Story of Quit Success

A former smoker, Clarissa Osborne, who is a mum and nan and is the Administration & Accounts Manager within the Health Directorate, has now successfully quit and tells her story.

"I started smoking when I was young. I was certainly a smoker by the time I was 16. It was just what we did when we went out and then it became more regular. I first tried to give up six years ago. I couldn't afford it. I was smoking a pack every other day and one a day at weekend, and it added up. If I add it up, it's horrific. I was spending over £100 a month, which is well over a thousand pounds a year! I quit for a year but then things like stress came and I took it up again. I then tried to quit a few years later, but had again re-started, just a little at first but it became more regular again especially when I wasn't at work, like at the weekends.

"In 2018 I decided this was time to finally quit. The money was one thing – I can use it on better things like my house and also my son asked me to quit. I already wasn't smoking at work but around that time too the new Smoke-Free scheme came into place - so I couldn't smoke when I went up to Francis Plain unless I went away from the site. I didn't want to keep leaving the site and so that added another reason to stop.

"I had an 'MOT' session as part of our Workforce Wellbeing a few months ago and told the nurse that I wanted to quit and I got the free NRT. I got the patches and the gum but I didn't use the gum in the end. At first it was hard. During the first week there was a family gathering and others were smoking. I had withdrawal symptoms. I think I had a cigarette, but felt guilty. I kept using the patches but after a tough day that first week I had another cigarette. That was my last cigarette within the four days of trying to quit, and that was over three months ago.

"One thing that I thought was a bit funny at first was when my son rolled me a paper cigarette and I actually used that at home when I missed holding a cigarette. It helped, along with the patches, and it became second nature that I sometimes forgot to put a patch on and didn't notice. They helped, but I was motivated to quit. My son was pleased and he really encouraged me and helped me to do it.

“Now we don’t even talk about it. It’s just not a thing any more, and just not something I do. I now go to gatherings and others might go out to smoke and I can join them and it doesn’t bother me. I’m now trying to persuade others I know to have a go with a patch.

“I was more out of breath at first but, after giving up, I can now breathe a bit more easily. Ask me in a year and I know that I will have a different answer, like I can run up the stairs to my office in the Admin Block! Since I’ve quit, I do have more energy as I go walking a lot more and I gradually increase the distance each week.”

Smoking Cessation Support

If you’ve tried to quit and have struggled, go back and the service can help you get back on track. Some people find that a different form of NRT works better for them, so it’s worth trying a different one if the other didn’t help as much as you needed. Gum, patches and Champix tablets are all options though suit different people better.

If you haven’t yet tried to quit but would like to, just make an appointment for Smoking Cessation at the Medical Records or by calling the Half Tree Hollow Clinic on tel: 23563.