

Monday, 23 September 2019

Stop smoking this Stoptober

An annual campaign – now in its eight year - to get smokers to quit smoking will next month highlight the benefits quitting has on a person's mental wellbeing.

Dr Rhona Reardon, lead Stop Smoking Nurse Specialist from Health and Community Services' Help2Quit, is urging islanders to take part in October's Stoptober, a campaign where smokers are challenged to not light up during the month. This year the campaign focuses on the benefits that stopping smoking can have on mental wellbeing. These benefits include: lowering anxiety, depression and stress levels, increasing confidence, reducing money worries as well as improving quality of life and mood.

Many islanders who access Help2Quit say stress is a reason why they smoke and they also express concern about experiencing anxiety if they do quit. Dr Reardon said smokers experience cravings about an hour after their last cigarette which can cause irritability and anxiety. She added: "When a smoker lights up another cigarette, these feelings are relieved, but only temporarily, meaning they associate improved mood and relaxation with smoking. It's a vicious cycle as it's the smoking itself that likely caused the feelings of anxiety and irritation in the first place.

"As part of our service we help smokers plan ways of coping without lighting up. Many report an improved mood and say that they are better at dealing with stress once they quit and are over the withdrawal symptoms. Some quitters also report feeling more confident as they are no longer controlled by nicotine addiction."

Another positive outcome for stopping smoking is that smokers' children are less likely to take up the habit if their parent quits. Stop smoking support is available to all islanders and there are 22 pharmacies which can offer help and support to quit.

Dr Reardon said: "You can greatly increase your chance of quitting smoking by stopping with another person or a group of people as you can all give each other extra support and encouragement."

Sara Kynicos, Superintendent Pharmacist said: "We often see an increase in the number of people wanting to quit during Stoptober as the challenge of stopping smoking for 28 days initially can make it seem manageable."

Smokers in Jersey who want to find out more about Help2Quit can visit gov.je/stopsmoking or call 0800 7351155. For further information about Stoptober log on to www.nhs.uk/oneyou/stoptober/home.