

Quit Smoking with Pharmacy Support

New research from LloydsPharmacy finds that over 70% of Irish smokers have previously tried to give up cigarettes and have been unsuccessful – but it's never too late to ditch the habit.



Bernadette O'Regan Pharmacy manager and Jennifer Mathers, supervising pharmacist Pictured from the LloydsPharmacy store in The Lough Shopping Centre. New research from LloydsPharmacy finds that over 70% of Irish smokers have previously tried to give up cigarettes and have been unsuccessful. LloydsPharmacy staff are calling on the people of Cork to ditch the habit and in turn, make Cork a smoking free zone

LloydsPharmacy stores nationwide, want to make Irish consumers aware it's never too late to quit smoking and that there are a range of services available to help. No matter when you decide to give up, the positive outcomes will enhance your overall health and wellbeing.

Smoking is the leading cause of avoidable deaths in Ireland* with 6,000 people dying each year from the effects of smoking. LloydsPharmacy have released new research giving an insight into the obstacles and thoughts amongst Irish adults when it comes to breaking the habit of smoking. Almost 7 in 10 Irish adults claim that they have been smoking for 10 years or more, with women more likely to have done so than men. Shockingly, over half of those surveyed (53%) claimed to have first begun smoking under the legal age limit of 18 years old.

According to LloydsPharmacy research, almost 6 in 10 (56%) of those who currently smoke

and have previously tried to give up smoking claim that the cost of smoking was a motivator in their decision, with almost half (48%) claiming that they did so to prevent future health problems.

However, with only 29% of smokers claiming to have spoken with their Pharmacist, LloydsPharmacy are on a mission to help people this year on their quit smoking journey with friendly expert advice and support. Each LloydsPharmacy features a dedicated care room where customers can talk through their experiences in private with trained staff.

In Ireland, the current government target is for Ireland to be tobacco-free by 2025. There are a broad range of products and support available from LloydsPharmacy stores nationwide which can aid with the process of quitting smoking. Pharmacists across Ireland hold a unique expertise and opportunity to promote correct and sustained use of stop smoking medication. A wide

range of Nicotine Replacement Therapy products are available from LloydsPharmacy including lozenges, gum, inhalers, sprays and patches - there is a range of options that can help support the customer manage the cravings.

Denis O'Driscoll, LloydsPharmacy Superintendent Pharmacist said, "Over the past year, we have seen an increase in those partaking in our quit smoking services with a particular increase in customers seeking NRT products such as lozenges, gum and sprays. Our trained pharmacy teams nationwide are available to speak with anyone thinking about giving up whether they've smoked for 1 year or 10. We will work to find the best approach for each person and understand that giving up smoking is a process. Knowing where you are in that process can help you decide what to do next to stop smoking. Our LloydsPharmacy stores feature confidential care rooms where a trained Pharmacist can speak with customers on the benefits of NRT and the options available to them. Now, as the COVID-19 pandemic continues, Pharmacists can play a pivotal role in educating people on their health and offer sound advice and quick service."

Winter Pressures

A range of factors including the impact of winter and the high numbers in hospital and attending ED are leading to a very high demand on both hospital and community services. This morning there are 380 patients in hospitals awaiting a hospital bed, while there are 90 hospital beds currently available, a further 250 are closed as a result of Covid-19.

While hospitals continue to operate a dual system to reduce the impact of possible Covid-19 outbreaks, with Covid and non-Covid pathways in place, there are record numbers of people moving through services for treatment. Covid-19 is continuing to have an impact on services, as the HSE continue to manage and care for patients with Covid-19.

At the time of going to press, there were 601 COVID-19 reported outbreaks across all community settings, with 51% of all nursing homes in outbreak, with 50 confirmed outbreaks in the last 7 days. This is having a significant impact on the number of people awaiting discharge in an acute hospital. There is also a high number of people awaiting carers to support them to remain at home and/or delayed discharge.

In line with the HSE Winter Plan, a number of measures are being taken to manage this period of high demand, in order to de-escalate and assist with patient flow.

- This includes increased acute and community bed capacity, continuing to use Private Hospitals and other private diagnostic facilities to support access for patients.
- There were over 71,000 referrals to Community Intervention Teams in 2021, nearly 19% ahead of target.
- Investment in access to diagnostics helped to keep people from unnecessarily attending acute hospitals last year, with over 135,000 radiology scans provided in the community.