

Why it's good to give up!



WE'RE ALL AWARE THAT SMOKING AND DRINKING TOO MUCH ALCOHOL ARE BAD HABITS, BUT THERE'S LOTS OF SUPPORT OUT THERE TO HELP YOU STOP, EXPLAINS DR ELLIE CANNON

October is a good month to quit unhealthy habits, as two really important health initiatives are happening. Stoptober is Public Health England's challenge to quit smoking for a month, while Go Sober For October is a fundraising challenge by Macmillan Cancer Support. Which one will boost your health, now and in the long-term?

MANAGEABLE TARGETS

If you can stop smoking for 28 days, you are five times more likely to quit for good. The beauty of trying the 28-day challenge is that it feels achievable to concentrate on quitting just for four weeks – but, once they hit the target, many quitters keep going, building on their success. Sign up to the Stoptober 2017 daily emails for support, or download the Stoptober app.

POSSIBLE PREVENTION

We all know that smoking is related to lung cancer, but it is also linked to cervical cancer, plus distressing heart and lung conditions such as emphysema. In the early stages of smoking-related lung disease, quitting can be enough to halt the process, and even reverse some of the damage. Your doctor or local pharmacist may offer anti-smoking patches or tablets to help you succeed.



CASH IN ON YOUR SUCCESS

Have a look at what you could save by quitting. Cigarettes are an expensive habit, so that can be a huge incentive for many. A 20-a-day smoker could save well over £3,000 a year by stubbing out those butts completely – that's a lot of extra cash at your disposal. Write down what you're saving each day on the calendar, and make sure you treat yourself or the family each week.

SLEEP EASY

Going sober can have really noticeable short-term effects. You will sleep better, have more energy and wake up in the morning refreshed, without that terrible hangover. In the long-term, if you cut down for good, you are reducing your risk of high blood pressure and breast cancer. Being able to cut out alcohol for a month can also show that you are not dependent on it.



DRY DAYS

Go Sober For October is actually a fundraising challenge, but it's still a great opportunity to think about your drinking habits. The recommended alcohol intake per week for adults – both men and women – is less than 14 units, where a unit is a small glass of wine or one measure of spirits. Experts advise you spread your units throughout the week, with a regular two days off in a row.



Look younger with Lesley



Anti-ageing guru **Lesley Reynolds** reveals the latest treatments to help you stay youthful

Losing a large amount of weight is a life-changing feat, but it can leave an unfortunate legacy – excess skin. Here's how to deal with the after-effects of weight loss

TIGHTEN THOSE ARMS

A surgical arm lift, or brachioplasty, is the best option for loose, excess skin under the arms. An incision is made from the armpit down to the elbow to remove skin, leaving scarring on the underside of the arm. Sometimes, if there is a small

amount of excess skin, the incision can be shortened. It's performed under general anaesthetic and you will need to rest for at least two weeks. Compression garments are also worn for up to six weeks, and scarring can take up to a year to fade. From £5,000.

TUMMY TROUBLES

No amount of sit-ups will tighten saggy skin! A tummy tuck – or abdominoplasty – is the only permanent approach. The amount of loose skin there dictates whether you'll have a mini tuck or a full-on procedure. The traditional tummy tuck removes saggy skin and repairs stretched muscles. It can be painful and leave scarring, with at least a month's recovery time, and final results won't be noticeable for several months. From £5,000.



BODY LIFT

The most effective way to remove excess skin after dramatic weight loss, this is a major operation. Under general anaesthetic, unwanted tissue is cut away and muscles tightened, then everything's stitched back together. You

may need a hospital stay; there will be significant scarring and several layers of stitches, and full recovery can take up to eight weeks. It's only available privately, unless there is disability or infection. Expect to pay anything up to £20,000.

CUT THE CALORIES

One of the main benefits of quitting alcohol is the reduction in calories you'll consume. Many people do not realise just how many calories are in a pint of beer or a glass of wine. A couple of glasses in the evening can top over 300 calories. That's the same as a burger, which would take more than 30 minutes of running to burn off!



SEEK ADVICE

If you think you may have a significant problem with an addiction to smoking and/or alcohol and it's seriously affecting your life, speak to your GP urgently. They can offer medical help and advice, plus therapy, quitting support services and support workers to help you reduce your intake. If you're a very heavy drinker, cutting down or 'detoxing' can be dangerous and must be done safely, under medical supervision.

AND DON'T FORGET...

- How loose your skin gets depends on several factors – your age, how much weight you've lost, any yo-yo dieting and how quickly you lost weight. Genetics play a part, too. The older you are and the bigger the weight loss, the more likely it is that skin will not snap back as it used to.
- There are plenty of other ways to improve muscle tone,

such as regular exercise, but nothing will improve the loose skin that sits on top of the muscles.

- Skin can expand and contract – as it does during pregnancy – but it can only stretch so far before it loses its elasticity. If you are on a weight-loss plan, it's vital to lose fat slowly, at a rate of around 1-2lb per week.

For more information on Lesley and her team of doctors, please visit harleystreetskinclinic.com