

# Smoking and alcohol use and infertility

## Information for patients

### Smoking

Smoking/vaping is likely to reduce fertility in women. Breathing in someone else's cigarette smoke (passive smoking) is also likely to reduce a woman's chances of getting pregnant. If you smoke or vape your GP should offer you help to stop if you wish. The [NHS Smoking Helpline](#) can also provide advice and

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support – the phone number is 0300 123 1044.

For men, there is a link between smoking/vaping and poorer [semen](#) quality (though the effect of this on fertility is uncertain). Stopping smoking or vaping will improve your general health.

## Alcohol

For men, your fertility is unlikely to be affected if your alcohol consumption is within the recommended limit of 3 to 4 units of alcohol per day. A pint of normal-strength beer is about 2 units and a small (125 ml) glass of wine is about 1.5 units (see the [NHS website](#) for more information). Drinking excessive amounts of alcohol can affect semen quality.

In women, alcohol can harm developing babies. If you are trying to get pregnant

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you can cut down the risk of harming your unborn baby by drinking no more than 1 or 2 units of alcohol once or twice a week.

## **Criteria for fertility treatment and investigations**

If partners/couples wish to be referred to Fertility Services and progress with treatment or investigations, they both need to be smoke/vape free for three months.

We are unable to offer any definite investigation or treatment in the meantime.

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**Further information and advice can be obtained from:**

NICE Guidance CG 156

ICB West Kent and Medway criteria for Assisted Conception Policy Protocols

**NHS 111**

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**NHS Choices online**

[www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

**Fertility Service**

[Mtw-tr.fertility@nhs.net](mailto:Mtw-tr.fertility@nhs.net)

**MTW NHS Trust is committed to making its patient information accessible in a range of languages and formats. If you need this leaflet in another language or format please ask one of your clinical care team or the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS). We will do our best to arrange this.**

Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust welcomes all forms of feedback from our service users. If the standard of service you have received from the Trust does not meet your expectations, we want to hear from you. Please speak with the ward manager or the nurse in

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charge in the first instance, or you can contact the **Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)** on:

**Telephone:** ☎ 01622 224960 or ☎ 01892 632953

**Email:** [mtw-tr.palsoffice@nhs.net](mailto:mtw-tr.palsoffice@nhs.net)

**or visit their office** at either Maidstone or Tunbridge Wells Hospital between 9.00am and 5.00pm, Monday to Friday.

You can be confident that your care will not be affected by highlighting any areas of concern or making a complaint. The Trust will retain a record of your contact, which is held separately to any medical records. If you are acting on behalf of a patient, we may need to obtain the patient's consent in order to protect patient confidentiality. More information on PALS or making a complaint can be found on the Trust's website: [www.mtw.nhs.uk](http://www.mtw.nhs.uk) or pick up a leaflet from main reception.

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