Did you know that the smoke – not the tar, nicotine or carbon monoxide – from tobacco can make lots of different medications work less well? That’s right, smoking can make mental health medications less effective. From medication that can add to or worsen anxiety, stress and depression, smoking releases nicotine – which in turn changes brain chemistry and sets up a cycle of stress and anxiety. This cycle breeds nausea and the withdrawals smokers feel good about quickly drop after the first few. Nicotine disrupts this balance and sets up a cycle of stress and anxiety which in turn triggers a desire for another cigarette. Smoking releases nicotine – which in turn

The development of nicotine dependence

1. Smoking releases nicotine
2. Nicotine travels to the brain
3. Nicotine activates nicotinic receptors which stimulate the release of dopamine
4. Dopamine released, leading to pleasant feelings of calmness and reward
5. Dopamine levels reduce, leading to withdrawal symptoms of stress and anxiety
6. Withdrawal triggers desire for another cigarette
7. The development of nicotine dependence

Know the impact

The effect of smoking on mental health medications
If you’re taking medication for your mental health condition, smoking can interfere with how well it works in your body and you might be on a higher dose than is really necessary.

If you would like to know more, speak to your CPN, GP or Mental Health Consultant.

Never reduce mental health medications unless advised to do so by a medical professional.