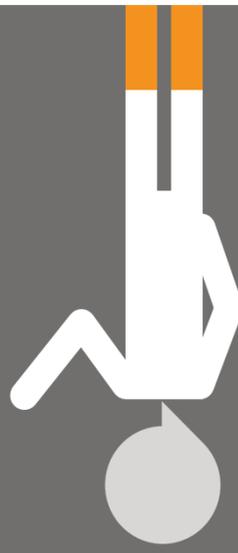
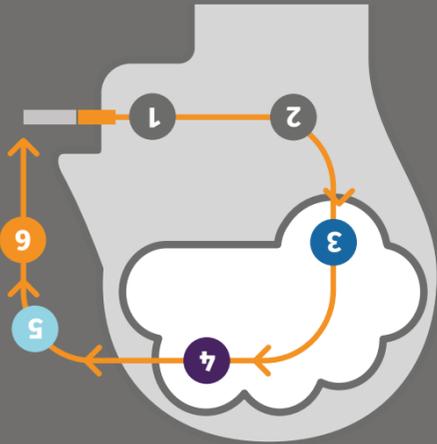


*Did you know that  
the smoke – not the  
tar, nicotine or carbon  
monoxide – from  
tobacco can make  
lots of different  
medications work  
less well?*



**The development of nicotine dependence**

- 1 Nicotine delivered by smoking
- 2 Nicotine travels to the brain
- 3 Nicotine activates nicotinic receptors which stimulates 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



Smoking releases nicotine – which in turn changes brain chemistry and sets up a 'reward' pathway to release dopamine. But this 'feel good' factor quickly drops after a cigarette is finished and the withdrawal from nicotine is what can add to – or worsen – anxiety, stress and depression.

**Impact**

# Know the impact

The effect of smoking on  
mental health medications



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Action on Smoking & Health (Scotland) (ASH Scotland) is a registered Scottish charity (SC 010412) and a company limited by guarantee (Scottish company no 141711). The registered office is 8 Frederick Street, Edinburgh EH2 2HB.



**Smoking can reduce the effectiveness of some mental health medications by up to**

**50%**



[www.impact.scot](http://www.impact.scot)

**Stopping smoking can mean that you might be able to reduce the level of medications you're on.**



**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.*