

E-cigarettes may be more effective than nicotine patches in helping pregnant women who smoke quit, and are just as safe

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E-cigarettes are just as safe as nicotine patches for pregnant women and may help more women stop smoking, new research from Queen Mary

University of London suggests. The study, published in *Nature Medicine*, is the first to examine the safety and efficacy of e-cigarettes among pregnant smokers.

While many women stop smoking when they become pregnant, some find it difficult to stop, particularly those from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds. Two stop-smoking medications have been tested with [pregnant smokers](#) so far—[nicotine](#) replacement treatments such as nicotine chewing gum or [patches](#), and bupropion—an antidepressant. Nicotine replacement was shown to have only limited effects, while bupropion had none.

The new study shows that, as with smokers who are not pregnant, [e-cigarettes](#) may be more effective than [nicotine patches](#) and do not pose any greater risks to mothers or babies during pregnancy.

The study involved 1,140 pregnant smokers who were randomly divided into two groups. One was given e-cigarettes, while the other was given nicotine patches. Quit rates in the two study arms were similar, but some successful quitters in the patch group stopped smoking using e-cigarettes rather than patches. When this was controlled for, the e-cigarette group had better proven quit rates at end of pregnancy than the patch group (6.8% vs 4.4%, p

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