



Helping Smokers Quit

A Guide for Clinicians

National Quitline

1-800-QUIT NOW



U.S. Department of Health
and Human Services
Public Health Service

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TOBACCO
free
NURSES

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**Quitting smoking may be one
of the hardest things that your patients
may ever have to do. Let them know that
they don't have to do it alone**

VA Public Health Strategic Health Care Group



open for medication chart

Ask about tobacco use at every visit.

Implement a system in your clinical setting that ensures that tobacco-use status is obtained and recorded at every patient contact.

VITAL SIGNS

Blood Pressure: _____

Pulse: _____ Weight: _____

Temperature: _____

Respiratory Rate: _____

Tobacco Use: **Current** **Former** **Never**
(circle one)

Advise

Advise tobacco users to quit.

Tell your patient

*“quitting smoking is the
most important thing you
can do to protect your
health.”*



Assess readiness to quit.

Ask every tobacco user if he/she is willing to quit at this time.

- ▶ If willing to quit, provide resources and assistance (see *Assist* section).
- ▶ If unwilling to quit, provide resources and help patient identify barriers to quitting.



Assist tobacco users with a quit plan.

Advise the smoker to:

- ▶ Set a quit date, ideally within 2 weeks.
- ▶ Get support from family, friends, and coworkers.
- ▶ Review past quit attempts—what helped, what led to relapse.
- ▶ Anticipate challenges, particularly during the critical first few weeks, including nicotine withdrawal.
- ▶ Identify reasons for quitting and benefits of quitting.

(more)



(Assist continued)

Give advice on successful quitting:

- ▶ Total abstinence is essential—not even a single puff.
- ▶ Drinking alcohol is strongly associated with relapse.
- ▶ Having other smokers in the household hinders successful quitting.

Encourage use of pharmacotherapy:

- ▶ Prescribe smoking cessation medications, such as the nicotine patch, gum or lozenge*, or bupropion, unless contraindicated. See fold-out dosing chart.

Provide resources:

- ▶ Call toll-free National Quitline at 1-800-QUIT NOW.
- ▶ Refer to Web sites for free materials:
 - Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality:
www.ahrq.gov/path/tobacco/htm
 - Tobacco Free Nurses:
www.tobaccofreenurses.org

Make cessation materials available that are appropriate by age, culture, language, education, and pregnancy status.

* Approved by the FDA October 2002.



Arrange followup visits.

Provide information for followup visits with his/her health care provider.

If a relapse occurs, encourage repeat quit attempt. Tell patient that relapse is part of the quitting process.

- ▶ Review circumstances that caused relapse. Use relapse as a learning experience.
- ▶ Reassess pharmacotherapy use and problems.
- ▶ Refer to National Quitline at 1-800-QUIT NOW.

Refer to Web sites for clinical practice guidelines on treating and managing tobacco use:

- Public Health Service: www.ahrq.gov/path/tobacco/htm.
- Veterans Administration/Department of Defense: www.oqp.med.va.gov/cpg/TUC3/TUC_Base.htm

