

Cessation Counseling Q&A



CESSATION COUNSELING 101

Stamping out your last cigarette isn't easy, but VA is committed to providing the **tools and expertise** to help you every step of the way. VA offers medications to help curb your cravings, mobile phone apps to get support when you need a motivational boost, and one of the most effective ways to end your relationship with tobacco: cessation counseling. (Join us for the **Great American Smokeout on November 19** and consider making it your quit date!)

1. WHAT IS CESSATION COUNSELING?

VA's tobacco cessation counseling involves **talking with a health care provider or quitline counselor** about your tobacco use and the role it plays in your daily routine so you can figure out how to stop. It can help you recognize your triggers and make the behavioral changes needed to break free of tobacco. These counseling sessions can be brief or more intensive, and they typically involve multiple sessions.

2. WHAT IS A TRIGGER?

In this instance, triggers are **things that make you want to use tobacco**. These could include talking on the phone, drinking a cup of coffee, drinking alcohol, feeling bored, or needing a break. Counseling will help you figure out how you can avoid or cope with your triggers so you don't relapse and start smoking again.

3. WHAT IF I CAN'T GO TO A VA FACILITY?

When circumstances allow, VA provides Veterans with in-person individual and group tobacco cessation counseling. For those unable to visit a facility for any reason, VA offers counseling by telephone and VA Video Connect. **Contact your VA health care provider to learn about remote counseling** as well as tobacco cessation clinics and group counseling sessions available online. For phone support before or during the cessation process, call **1-855-QUIT-VET** (1-855-784-8838) and speak with a trained quitline counselor Monday through Friday, between 9 a.m. and 9 p.m. Eastern time.

4. CAN I CALL OR TEXT FOR HELP?

Yes! **Veterans may call 1-855-QUIT-VET** (1-855-784-8838) Monday through Friday, between 9 a.m. and 9 p.m. Eastern time. Quit VET connects Veterans with trained tobacco cessation counselors who can help them develop a personal quit plan and can provide ongoing counseling and support to prevent relapse.

For extra support to help you end your relationship with tobacco, **text VET to 47848 and enroll in SmokefreeVET**, VA's text messaging program. When you text keywords like URGE, STRESS, or SMOKED, you will receive texts with tips and tools to beat cravings and help you through any rough patches. Para inscribirse en **SmokefreeVET en español**, manda el texto VETesp al 47848.



5. DOES CESSATION COUNSELING HELP?

Research has shown that counseling — even with a health care provider who does not specialize in therapy — can significantly improve one’s chances of quitting. Experts say **a combination of approaches that includes tobacco cessation counseling usually works best**. For example, combining [counseling and medication](#) works better than using medication alone. Veterans should work with their VA care team to determine the type of counseling that is best for them.

6. IF I’M TAKING MEDICATION, WHY DO I NEED COUNSELING?

Counseling and medication fit together like pieces of a puzzle. While medication can help relieve cravings and physical withdrawal symptoms, **counseling can help people who smoke address behaviors and triggers that lead to tobacco use**. Veterans can learn more about how those pieces fit together by watching the Tobacco and Health [Counseling and Medication video](#) and talking with their VA health care provider.

7. WHAT VA RESOURCES ARE AVAILABLE TO ME?

- Phone Support: [1-855-QUIT-VET](#) (Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Eastern time; available in English and Spanish)
- Text Messaging: [SmokefreeVET](#) (Text VET to 47848)
- [Online resources](#)
- [Nicotine Replacement Therapy](#)
- Virtual Counseling/TeleMental Health
- Individual Therapy
- Group Therapy
- Cessation Clinics
- Other

MY NEXT STEPS

My Tobacco Cessation Team:

Program Coordinator

Name: _____

Phone: _____

My Counselor

Name: _____

Phone: _____



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