



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

