

Smoking

An educational service of CME Resource

Ask Your Patients ...

"Do you know there are resources to help you quit smoking?"

If Your Patient Asks ...

"How can I quit smoking?"

UNDERSTAND the issue

More than **48 million** adults and teenagers in the United States **use tobacco**, and nearly **400,000 will die** from a smoking-related disease each year.¹

Smoking is linked to **30%** of all **cancer-related deaths**, as well as a **33%** of deaths related to **cardiovascular disease** and **22%** of deaths related to **respiratory disease**.² As such, tobacco use is the preeminent **preventable cause of death** today. In fact, the number of deaths caused by tobacco use is greater than the combined number of deaths resulting from AIDS, alcohol use, automobile accidents, homicide, suicides, drugs and fires.²

The good news is that **70%** of all **smokers want to quit**. Only a small fraction of healthcare professionals **discuss smoking cessation** and provide treatment options for their patients. Clearly, healthcare professionals need to more effectively **counsel their patients**.

HELP patients quit

The single most important guideline available for clinicians to help patients quit smoking is the Five Major Steps to Intervention proposed by the 2000 U.S. Public Health Service Clinical Practice Guideline, often referred to as the **5 A's**.⁵

Ask

Document tobacco use status for every patient at every visit. Including tobacco use status as a vital sign can help in this regard.

Advise

Discuss the patient's individual health risks due to smoking and urge the patient to quit.

Assess

Determine whether the patient is ready to commit to tobacco cessation.

Assist

Offer counseling and pharmacotherapy to patients who wish to quit smoking.

Arrange

Schedule follow-up, either in person or by telephone, preferably within the first week after an established quit date.

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SHARE the responsibility

A variety of factors prevent physicians from carrying out the simple strategy of the 5 A's, and time constraints and reimbursement issues are major challenges. One way to address these challenges is to Ask and Advise and then refer patients to a quitline, a telephone-based cessation technique that has been shown to be effective.

Because of their position at the front line of care, nurses are an excellent choice for this task. The value of this approach is found in the large number of nurses. It has been estimated that if each nurse helped only one person to quit per year, the quit rate would triple.⁶

Recognize that patients will have to progress through several stages of behavior change to ultimately quit. Relapse is common, both during the attempt and afterwards.

LEAD by example

Not only does smoking set a bad example, it influences decision-making regarding patient counseling. Those healthcare professionals who do smoke should quit immediately. A recent study found that nurses who smoked were less likely to discuss smoking cessation with patients.⁷ A unique organization, Tobacco Free Nurses, is dedicated to helping nurses and student nurses quit and encouraging them to assume responsibility in talking with patients.

All healthcare professionals can lead by example by:

- Supporting population-based strategies for tobacco control, such as clean air policies, excise taxes, and laws to restrict youth access to tobacco
- Participating in community-based educational programs on prevention and cessation
- Enhancing their own education and training and training in cessation techniques

SEEK resources

Smokefree.gov (www.smokefree.gov)

This website offers a variety of tools designed to help people quit smoking, including an online step-by-step cessation guide, phone numbers for telephone support, and a link to instant messaging with counselors. The site was developed by the National Cancer Institute, with assistance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the American Cancer Society.

National Network of Tobacco Cessation Quitlines (1-800 QUIT NOW [1-800-784-8669])

The National Network of Tobacco Cessation Quitlines is a state/federal partnership that provides tobacco users in every state with access to the tools and resources they need to quit smoking. The toll-free number serves as a single point of access to state-based quitlines.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Tobacco Information and Prevention Source (TIPS) (www.cdc.gov/tobacco/)

This website provides a wide variety of resources for healthcare professionals as well as smokers, including reports from the Surgeon General, information on tobacco control campaigns, statistics on smoking, and the most recent smoking-related publications in the medical literature.

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Tobacco Free Nurses (<http://tobaccofreenurses.org>)

Tobacco Free Nurses is the first national program dedicated to helping nurses and student nurses quit smoking and to encouraging nurses to assume more responsibility in helping individuals to quit. The site offers a link to QuitNet, an online community of smokers and ex-smokers.

Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids (www.tobaccofreekids.org)

The Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids is one of the country's largest non-governmental initiatives designed to protect children from tobacco addiction and exposure to secondhand smoke.

World Health Organization (WHO) Tobacco Free Initiative (www.who.int/tobacco)

This area of the WHO website is devoted to information on the Tobacco Free Initiative (TFI), established in July 1998 to focus international attention, resources, and action on the global tobacco epidemic.

- 1 U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *The Health Consequences of Smoking: A Report of the Surgeon General*. Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health; 2004.
- 2 U.S. Public Health Service. *Treating Tobacco Use and Dependence*. Summary, June 2000. Available at www.surgeongeneral.gov/tobacco/smokesum.htm. Accessed August 30, 2006.
- 3 National Institutes of Health State-of-the-Science Conference Statement. Tobacco Use: Prevention, Cessation, and Control. June 12–14, 2006. Available at <http://consensus.nih.gov/2006/TobaccoStatementDraft061406.pdf>. Accessed August 30, 2006.
- 4 Schroeder, SA. What to do with a patient who smokes. *J Am Med Assoc*. 2005; 294:482-487.
- 5 U.S. Public Health Service. *Five Major Steps to Intervention (The "5 A's")*. Rockville, MD: Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. Available at www.ahrq.gov/clinic/tobacco/5steps.htm. Accessed August 30, 2006.
- 6 Tobacco Free Nurses. Available at <http://tobaccofreenurses.org>. Accessed August 30, 2006.
- 7 Slater P, McElwee G, Fleming P, McKenna H. Nurses' smoking behaviour related to cessation practice. *Nurs Times*. 2006;102:32-37.

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