

Tips for helping clients stay smoke-free

Many of the cues to smoking are removed when clients are in hospital. Going back into the community will mean that clients are faced with these cues again and will do better at remaining smoke-free if they have thought about how they will deal with high risk situations. This is all part of relapse prevention.

It is a good opportunity while the client is still in hospital to work through some coping strategies with the client that can be recorded on their personalised Quit Plan (**See Tool 12. 'My Quit Plan'**). Alternatively the client can be referred to **Quitline 13 7848** for follow up support and counselling.

Key questions to ask to get more information about how the client feels about their smoking and quitting

- How do you feel about your smoking at the moment?
- Have you had any previous quit attempts and if so what happened?
- Why is quitting smoking important to you?
- Have you considered cutting down to quit using NRT?

Tips when talking with clients about smoking and quitting

- Focus on 'open-ended' questions. Open-ended questions encourage the client to offer information. When asking open-ended questions, express concern and interest, and not criticism or judgement, express empathy, and not sympathy.
- Encourage the client to think about how quitting relates to their values.
- Listen carefully to the reasons the client gives for continued smoking or quitting. Reflect on what the client has said and restate their reasons without making comment or passing judgement.
- Try to encourage 'change talk' – talk that focusses on reasons and actions associated with a positive change and discourage 'sustain talk' – talk that focusses on why the person can't make changes.

Assisting a client to stay quit

- Congratulate the client on remaining smoke-free while in hospital.
- Reinforce the benefits of quitting and of being a non-smoker. Personalise the benefits of quitting smoking. For example, improvement of client's other illnesses, not exposing others to second-hand smoke, feeling less anxious and stressed and saving money.
- Help the client identify high-risk situations such as drinking alcohol or coffee and socialising with friends who are smokers. Work out strategies to deal with these situations.
- Help the client identify behaviours that give them pleasure and can be used instead of smoking.
- Encourage the client to set some goals and rewards linked to staying smoke-free.
- Suggest the client keeps some oral NRT with them to deal with cravings for a cigarette.
- Recommend client reduces their usual caffeine intake by half and limits alcohol intake especially in the first weeks after quitting.
- Remind the client of the 'not one puff' rule to prevent relapse to smoking.
- If client is not ready to quit suggest cutting down to quit with NRT. Explain that it is safe to smoke while using NRT.
- Encourage the client to accept a referral to **Quitline 13 7848** for ongoing support and to visit the iCanQuit website (www.iCanQuit.com.au) for more tips and to share stories.

Turning barriers into opportunities

Many people find the idea of quitting smoking quite frightening – they fear failure and deprivation and the stress of withdrawal. Below are some common barriers to quitting and some possible strategies to help clients deal with these barriers. Clients may also identify other strategies that they want to try.

Barriers	Strategies to overcome
Prolonged cravings or withdrawal symptoms	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review use of NRT or other approved pharmacotherapy. If using NRT, check that ‘under-dosing’ is not occurring or the need for combination therapy (patch + oral NRT).• Make sure the client understands how to use the NRT correctly and has a minimum 3 day supply when discharged.
Smoking relieves stress	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Debunk the myth around smoking and stress (Refer Nicotine Dependence Guide, page 21).• Explore other ways of coping with stress such as progressive muscle relaxation and breathing techniques. Encourage the client to think about how a non-smoker would deal with the same stress. Discuss possible strategies.
Fear of failure or relapse	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discuss any previous quit attempts including methods used and any issues that arose. What worked, what didn’t work?• Help client to identify their triggers (situations, feelings) that usually lead to smoking. Work with the client to develop strategies to deal with these.• Emphasise that most people who quit have made many attempts before they have been successful.• Remind client that beginning to smoke (even a puff) will increase urges and make relapse more likely.• Help the client identify sources of support within his or her environment such as family and friends, GP and health professional.• Refer the client to the Quitline 13 7848 (13 QUIT) and to www.iCanQuit.com.au
Concern for weight gain	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reassure client that the weight gain on smoking cessation is usually modest (2-3kg) and that the main focus should be on quitting smoking – small weight gain can be addressed at a later stage.• Emphasise the importance of a healthy diet and lifestyle and strongly discourage low kilojoule dieting.• Recommend starting or gradually increasing physical activity.• For advice on health eating and exercise, refer the client to the Get Healthy Service: www.gethealthynsw.com.au/
Negative mood or depression not linked with nicotine withdrawal	If significant, provide or organise for counselling, or refer the client to a general practitioner or mental health professional.

For more information

- For more detailed information refer to ‘**Managing nicotine dependence: a guide for NSW Health staff**’ download or order from the NSW Health website: www.health.nsw.gov.au/tobacco/Pages/managing-nicotine-dependence.aspx
Appendix 5 has detailed information on Motivational interviewing.
- Consumer fact sheet on Nicotine dependence and withdrawal, Getting ready to quit, Supporting someone to quit smoking and others are available to download and order from the NSW Health website: www.health.nsw.gov.au/tobacco/Pages/benefits-of-quitting.aspx