

Tobacco Cessation Amid COVID-19 Pandemic: What Dental Providers Can Do in Practice NOW

ASK about all tobacco use

- Dental professionals should address tobacco use with *all* patients at every visit, and they should reach out virtually to their current patients who smoke or vape and offer guidance.
- Ask and document in the chart all forms of tobacco use, including vaping, and other non-cigarette tobacco, as well as cannabis use.
- Patients report *greater* satisfaction with their dental visits when tobacco cessation support is offered.
- Discuss tobacco use during tele-dentistry encounters or emergency visits.

ADVISE tobacco users to quit

- Provide clear, non-judgmental, personalized recommendations to quit. “The most important thing you can do for your oral and overall health is quit, and I can help you.”
- The COVID-19 pandemic is a source of stress and anxiety for everyone. Assure your patients they have the support and help they need to quit.
- Share information about the association between tobacco use and COVID-19 severity and the benefits of tobacco cessation on your practice website, social media, or email list-serve (*see Templates for Patient Outreach/Education below)
- Be sure your practice has information on-hand for patients. Compile a list of local programs that offer low-cost cessation services and have brochures and posters about the harms of tobacco use and ways to quit.

ASSESS readiness to quit

- Ask each tobacco user if they are willing to make a quit attempt now
- Most tobacco users want to quit but are facing a very powerful addiction
- Some patients are not at all ready to quit - don't force the issue
- Many patients will be open to the idea of quitting but need help to get there

ASSIST with quit attempt

- For patients willing to quit, assist with creating a quit plan and provide or refer the patient for supplemental counseling and other resources.
- The combination of counseling and medication dramatically improves a patient’s chance of quitting. All patients trying to quit should be offered pharmacological therapies. Talk through the over-the-counter options or prescribe medications that fit the patient's needs.
- Refer to your state's helpline or online/text resources. Visit [smokefree.gov](https://www.smokefree.gov) or call 1-800-QUIT-NOW for telephone, text, and app-based services, tools, and tips.
- Connect patients with local programs in your area.

ARRANGE for follow-up

- Follow up with all patients and monitor any challenges. Follow up can take place in practice, via EHR, or via text/phone.
- Document all counseling sessions in the patient's chart. These records provide a starting point for subsequent discussions.

When you complete a tobacco cessation encounter, use CDT code D1320. Some state Medicaid Dental Programs will reimburse for the service. Even if not yet reimbursable, using the code sends a powerful message to private insurers that this service is our responsibility.

Referral Options to Help your Patients Quit

- Local cessation programs or in-house tobacco cessation services
 - Many hospitals, healthcare companies, and employers offer tobacco cessation programs.
- State tobacco quit line (800-QUIT-NOW)
 - Many states also offer direct referral via fax, online, or through EHR. Find your state quit line and resources at map.naquitline.org.
- National Cancer Institute cessation website: <https://smokefree.gov>
- Truth Initiative's Become an Ex: www.becomeanex.org

Printable and Downloadable Resources for Your Practice

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Tips from Former Smokers website: <https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/campaign/tips/>
- <https://smokefree.gov/help-others-quit/health-professionals>

Tools for Dental Professionals to Learn More about Tobacco Cessation

- Identifying and Treating Patients Who Use Tobacco: Action Steps for Clinicians <https://millionhearts.hhs.gov/files/Tobacco-Cessation-Action-Guide.pdf>
- Talking to Youth about e-cigarettes: What Healthcare Providers Need to Know https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/basic_information/e-cigarettes/pdfs/OSH-E-Cigarettes-and-Youth-What-HCPs-Need-to-Know-20190327-508.pdf
- Treating Tobacco Use and Dependence, 2008 Update <https://www.ahrq.gov/sites/default/files/wysiwyg/professionals/clinicians-providers/guidelines-recommendations/tobacco/clinicians/references/quickref/tobaqrg.pdf>

Templates for Patient Outreach / Education

Consider these suggestions for social media or messages to share with your patients.

Smoking and vaping could worsen COVID-19 outcomes. Quit now to protect yourself.
<https://smokefree.gov>

Our practice is 100% committed to patient health and wellbeing. That means helping our patients live 100% tobacco and nicotine free. Visit our website for resources to help you quit.
[insert your practice url here]

Tools and resources are available to help young people quit vaping and smoking. Set a goal for healthier living while home from school. <https://teen.smokefree.gov>

Ready to take the next step to a tobacco-free life? Call us to schedule a virtual patient visit to discuss how to get there, how to manage stress, and other services and medications that can help. You don't have to do this alone! [insert your practice's phone number]

Help protect your lungs during the COVID-19 crisis. Learn from former smokers at
<https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/campaign/tips/index.html>

Smoking and vaping (and second-hand smoke/vape exposure) have been shown to impair the lungs ability to fight infection. Recent data suggests that current smokers and those with a history of smoking have a higher risk of developing severe symptoms from COVID-19. If you or someone you know smokes or vapes, consider lowering your risk of serious infection by quitting today. Visit smokefree.gov for more information.

Copy and paste the code below to your blog or site to display a Smokefree.gov Web button on your blog or Web site:

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<a href="http://smokefree.gov"></a>
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<a href="http://smokefree.gov"></a>
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