

## Guide Your Patients to a Smoke-Free Future

**It takes less than a minute to ask a question.**

**When you talk to your patients about smoking, the following table can help you ask the right questions.**

### **Precontemplation:**

Not thinking about stopping

Label chart.

Ask, "How are you feeling about your smoking?"

Show that you understand patients' feelings.

Encourage patients to consider both the good things and the not so good things about their smoking.

Offer information.

### **Contemplation:**

Thinking about stopping in the next 6 months.

Label chart.

Ask, "What do you see as the pros and cons about stopping smoking?"

Reinforce patients' reasons for wanting to stop smoking.

Help patients identify more reasons for wanting to stop.

Provide information.

### **Preparation:**

Planning to stop in next month

Label chart and note stop smoking date.

Reinforce, "You've made an important decision."

Ask questions to determine nicotine dependence.

Ask, "Have you decided what day you will stop?"

Offer a longer visit within a few days of stopping smoking date to discuss plan, especially if recommending drug therapy.

Provide information.

### **Action and Maintenance:**

Has stopped smoking

Label chart.

Ask, "How are things going?" Temptations? Slips?"

Normalize difficulties and provide encouragement and specific suggestions tailored to issues raised by patient.

Ask about drug therapy (if relevant).

Offer follow-up visits or referral and continuing support.

Provide information.

### **Smoking Again:**

Smoking regularly

Label chart.

Ask, "How are you feeling about stopping smoking?" If discouraged, acknowledge feelings.

Advise that often people attempt to stop several times and learn from their experience before succeeding.

Offer help when ready.

### **Keys to Effective Communication:**

1. Ask open-ended questions: e.g., "How are you feeling about your smoking now?"
2. Convey understanding: e.g., "You seem concerned about the impact of your smoking on your daughter."
3. Affirm/acknowledge quit attempt positively: e.g., "Even though it's been stressful, you haven't smoked for two weeks, that is a major accomplishment."
4. Summarize the key issues: e.g., "On the one hand, smoking helps you cope with stress; on the other, you are worried about your health."
5. Encourage patients to focus on reasons to quit: e.g., "What is the most important reason you have for wanting to stop smoking?"