

## 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](http://map.naquitline.org).
- National Cancer Institute cessation website: <https://smokefree.gov>
- Truth Initiative's Become an Ex: [www.becomeanex.org](http://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](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](https://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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