Help patients quit tobacco

Each year, 450,000 people die of preventable, smoking-related diseases.\(^1\) Physicians are in a unique position to help tobacco users quit by screening patients at annual visits and providing resources for tobacco cessation programs.

- Although most tobacco users say they want to quit, only 48 percent who saw a physician were advised to quit.
- Physician advice to quit tobacco prompts users to make quit attempts and increases quit rates.
- Counseling and medication should be offered to patients willing to make an attempt to quit.
- If a patient is not ready to quit, encourage tobacco reduction.

Intervening during an adolescent patient visit\(^3\)

Physicians should ask pediatric and adolescent patients about their tobacco use, and clearly communicate the importance of abstaining from tobacco.

- Asking adolescents about tobacco use and advising them to quit are the first steps toward the use of effective treatments to quit.
- In a sample of 11\(^{th}\) graders, more than 79 percent reported they would acknowledge tobacco use if asked.
- Physicians need to routinely assess adolescent tobacco use, offer counseling, and follow up with these patients.
- Physicians may not be aware of motivational interventions.
- It is important for physicians to intervene with adolescents in a manner that respects confidentiality and privacy (e.g., interviewing adolescents without their parents present).

Three steps you can take to encourage patients to quit\(^2\)

1. Ask patients if they use tobacco.
2. Advise those who use tobacco to quit.
3. Refer patient to evidence-based cessation services, such as a Quitline.

Resources for patients

The following are useful tobacco cessation resources and phone numbers you can give patients who are trying to quit.

**Pennsylvania Quitline**

1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669)

All Pennsylvania residents can receive free nicotine replacement products and up to five counseling sessions with a trained quit coach. Coaches are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.


**New Jersey Quitline**  
1-866-NJSTOPS (1-866-657-8677)

New Jersey residents will receive a Quit Guide in the mail and get five counseling sessions with a trained quit coach. Coaches are available throughout the week from 8 a.m. – 3 a.m. EST.

**Community-based tobacco cessation programs**

The following community-based tobacco cessation programs provide group counseling and one-on-one support.

**New Jersey**

- **HiTOPS, Inc:** Helps 13–27 year olds quit smoking through counseling and nicotine replacement therapy. Call 1-609-683-5155 or visit [www.hitops.org](http://www.hitops.org).

- **Virtua Memorial Hospital:** Offers group and individual counseling by professionals specially trained in smoking cessation. Call 1-888-Virtua-3.

- **Ocean Medical Center’s Freshstart Smoking Cessation Program:** This two-week program teaches participants skills to help them kick the habit, while addressing other issues such as addiction and dependency. Call 1-732-836-4042 to register.

**Pennsylvania**

- **Council of Spanish Speaking Organizations (CONCILIO):** Provides a Spanish-language tobacco cessation program for the adult (18+) Latino population in Philadelphia. Call 215-627-3100.

- **Jefferson University Hospital:** Provides a three-week tobacco cessation support/therapy program. Program fee applies. Call 215-503-6222.