

# Tips and Talking Points for Pharmacists



For patients at different stages of quitting.

Your encouragement, empathy and advice are critical throughout a patient's quit journey. **We can help you with those conversations.**

## ESTABLISHING A TRUSTING RELATIONSHIP

- Avoid judgmental bias. Create empathy ... "A lot of us have been there."
- Establish that you have been with them throughout the pandemic, and you care about them and their health.
- Create a bond with the patient about smoking and empathize about how difficult it is to quit tobacco. If you personally had a struggle with tobacco, refer to it. If you have a family member who has struggled/is struggling, refer to it. If you remember how ubiquitous tobacco was (armed forces handed out cigarettes; tobacco reps brought free cigarettes to schools; "smoked" candy cigarettes as a kid; smoking was allowed on flights and in workplaces), remind them how things have changed now that we know smoking can damage nearly every organ of the body.
- Quitting at any age contributes to health, including relieving depression and anxiety symptoms.
- Briefly share what kind of support is available. Make this easy by giving them an 802Quits brochure with examples of different options and free resources available.

## "I'M JUST NOT READY"

- If the spouse/partner or family member is in the house and also smokes, say, "You can do this together."
- Reference the patient's family history of illness if you are aware of it. "I'm concerned, Bob, because your father died of lung cancer, and your mother had emphysema; these are serious conditions that can shorten your life and your quality of life; I'd like to help you take care of this."
- A family history of Alzheimer's disease may also create motivation because long-term smoking is associated with developing Alzheimer's (over 70% increased risk).<sup>1</sup>
- Smokers may require higher doses of pain medications. Tobacco smoke interacts with medications by influencing the absorption, distribution, metabolism, or elimination of other drugs, potentially causing an altered pharmacologic response. Upon cessation, the patient might be able to use a lower dose.

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<sup>1</sup>Observational studies have shown that people who smoke are at higher risk of developing all types of dementia and a much higher risk (up to 79%) for Alzheimer's disease, specifically Barnes DE, Yaffe K (2011) [The projected effect of risk factor reduction on Alzheimer's disease prevalence](#). *Lancet Neurol* 10, 819-828.

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## “MY \_\_\_\_\_ SMOKED ALL THEIR LIFE, AND THEY DON’T HAVE HEALTH PROBLEMS”

- They may have just “lucked out”! There are many negative health consequences when you smoke.
- Cigarettes are more dangerous than they were 50 years ago. The industry has made them more effective at delivering nicotine and other toxic chemicals. So, unfortunately, current smokers may not be as lucky.
- We know tobacco use shortens life. Studies estimate on average that people who smoke have a life expectancy of 6.5 years less than non-smokers.<sup>2</sup>

## “I’VE TRIED BEFORE, AND IT DIDN’T WORK”

- There is no one way to quit, (refer to brochure if handy). There are many methods of support and medications people can use to reduce nicotine withdrawal. If what was tried before didn't work, recommend trying a different way.
- Going “cold turkey” isn't easy. Very few succeed, just 5%. Those who can get support are more likely to be successful.
- Every try counts! It can take many tries. Don't give up. Encourage the patient to keep trying different supports or combinations of medications until they find what works.
- Share a motivational message and tell your patient that you will check in to see how things are going when you see them again.

## NOW THERE ARE REWARDS AVAILABLE FOR SPECIAL POPULATIONS

... with enrollment and completion of 802Quits coaching calls (Vermonters 18+).

|  |                         |       |
|--|-------------------------|-------|
| Medicaid members or uninsured Vermonters | <b>Gift Cards Up To</b> | \$150 |
| People who use menthol products          |                         | \$50  |
| Pregnant or new parent                   |                         | \$250 |

## IF THE PATIENT APPEARS INTERESTED, YOU HAVE OPTIONS

- Get them started on the spot with a prescription for OTC [NRT](#).
- Enroll them in 802Quits with the [fax referral form](#).
- Share the 802Quits brochure and recommend they call 1-800-QUIT NOW or [enroll online](#).

## IF PATIENT IS NOT READY TO ENROLL

Tell your patient that you will be there to help them quit tobacco when they are ready.



**Need more free brochures, posters or other 802Quits materials for your practice?**

[Click here](#) to order.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1117323/>