# An A B CD approach to supporting people who smoke:

## A guide for health services

# Smoking is the largest preventable cause of death and disease in Australia.

Supporting people to quit smoking is one of the most cost effective healthcare interventions.

People accessing health services are likely to demonstrate higher rates of smoking than the general population.

Advice from a health professional is the greatest external trigger in prompting someone who smokes to attempt to quit.

It could be as simple as a one minute conversation with a health prompts a person to make a quit attempt.

# One in every 33 conversations will lead to a patient successfully quitting smoking.

The Victorian Government is committed to building the capacity of health services and health professionals to provide the best possible support for people who smoke to quit.

Ideally, all health services would adopt a systematic approach to identifying people who smoke, providing brief intervention responses and including smoking within discharge communication.

## A Ask

Ask all patients about smoking

## B Brief intervention

Provide brief intervention which may include:

Advise all smokers to quit

Offer written information (e.g. Quit pack)

Offer nicotine replacement therapy

Offer referral to relevant supports (e.g. Quitline, GP, smoking cessation clinic)

## CD Communication at Discharge

Communicate smoking status and action taken in discharge documentation

# Hear what the experts and patients have to say – start the conversation

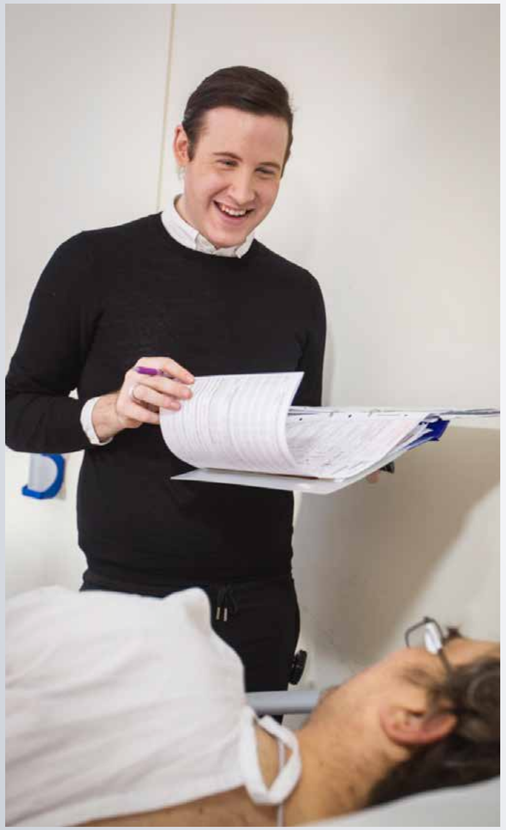
*Start the conversation* has been developed by Alfred Health and funded by the Victorian Government. It is designed to challenge health professionals to raise the topic of smoking with their patients.

The stories on this site 'start the conversation' are about real patients and clinicians. They share their experiences about the life-changing conversations that resulted in people stopping smoking.

http://starttheconversation.org.au

A Ask

# Every person who accesses a health service should be asked about smoking.



## Health Service

A health service should:

- Ensure clear clinical responsibility for asking patients about smoking (this may be one health discipline organisation wide or varied within the health service)
- Integrate smoking status within medical record documentation

## Health Professional

A health professional should:

- Ask every patient, as soon as practical, whether or not they smoke
  - Do you smoke?
  - Do you currently smoke?
  - Do you currently, or have you ever smoked?
- Document smoking status in the medical record
- Consider an individual's exposure to passive smoke, whether or not they smoke themselves. For example, living with a family member who smokes.
- Ideally, identify the level of nicotine dependency, past smoking history, successes and failures with previous quit attempts.

B Brief intervention

# Every person who smokes should be offered support to quit.

An offer of support should be attractive and emotionally salient. The way in which support is offered may vary depending on the needs and preferences of the individual.

Ideally, brief intervention support aims to assist long term quitting. In some cases, brief interventions may be more focussed on temporary management of nicotine withdrawal.

## Health Service

A health service should:

- Ensure clear clinical responsibility for providing a brief intervention response for patients who smoke (this may include strategies such as nurse initiated or pharmacist initiated nicotine replacement therapy)
- Support health professionals to build their skills in brief interventions (this may include communication skills to prompt behaviour change)
- Timely access to nicotine replacement therapy for patients (this may include a full range of nicotine replacement therapies on ward imprests across the health service)
- Integrate brief interventions within medical record documentation

B Brief intervention

# Every person who smokes should be offered support to quit.

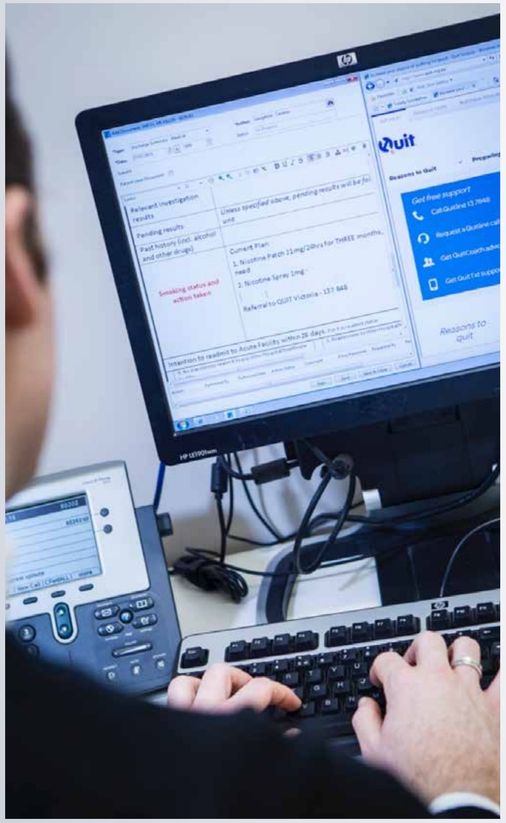
## Health Professional

A health professional should:

- Provide brief advice to quit smoking (which may be based on health, financial and/or social grounds depending on the individual circumstances)
- Offer pharmacotherapy such as nicotine replacement if clinically appropriate
- Provide access to written or digital materials
- Consider referral to relevant supports (this may include Quitline or other smoking cessation services)
- Document brief intervention within medical record

CD Communication at Discharge

# People are more likely to stay quit when they have access to long term supports.



It is important to ensure smoking status and action taken to support quitting is included in the documentation to the general practitioner, referrer and/or other healthcare provider.

## Health Service

A health service should:

- Ensure clear clinical responsibility for inclusion of smoking status and action taken within discharge documentation
- Consider templates for discharge communication which include smoking status and action taken (electronic templates may be preferable)

## Health Professional

A health professional should:

- Document smoking status in the discharge communication
- Explain any action taken such as provision of medication to support a quit attempt and/or referral to other smoking cessation supports
- Potentially, request continued support for the quit attempt by the primary care provider

# References


1. Australian Institute of Health & Welfare. Australia's health 2008. Cat. No. AUS 99. Canberra:AIHW, 2008.
2. West, R. (2006) Feasibility of a national longitudinal study ('The Smoking Toolkit Study') to monitor smoking cessation and attempts at harm reduction in the UK. www.smokinginengland.info/Ref/stp001.pdf
3. Stead L., Bergson G., Lancaster T. Physician advice for smoking cessation. Cochrane Database Syst Rev 2008; (2): CD0001654.
4. West, R, Fidler J (2011) Smoking and Smoking Cessation in England 2010. London: Vasco-Graphics. Available from www.smokinginengland.info

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Start the conversation

http://starttheconversation.org.au

Quit learning hub

http://www.quit.org.au/learning-hub

Supporting Patients to be Smokefree

http://health.vic.gov.au/hospitals/smokefreehospitals.htm

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