

for Dental Professionals

Protocols for Tobacco Cessation in the Dental Office

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Make tobacco use part of your standard review of new and recall patient health histories. See the next page of this handout for a sample tobacco-use questionnaire. Having the question, "Are you interested in quitting at this time?" on your health history questionnaire is a great way to start the conversation about quitting.

After reviewing the patient's health history, the receptionist flags the patient's chart (with the appropriate tobacco-use sticker) or makes a note in the electronic medical record.

The hygienist or dentist briefly discusses the patient's tobacco use history--including the effects of tobacco on oral health and the benefits of being tobacco free. This takes one to three minutes and should follow the 5 A's, as recommended by the U.S. Public Health Service Clinical Practice Guideline: *Treating Tobacco Use and Dependence*.



The 5 A's:

- **Ask** every patient if he or she smokes or chews tobacco (at every visit). Document it using a vital sign box, sticker or chart summary in the patient record.
- **Advise** tobacco users to quit. Be clear; avoid lecturing. Make it relevant for each patient (discoloration, receding gums, etc.). "Quitting tobacco use is the most important thing you can do for your health and for your teeth." If the patient is not interested in quitting, assure him or her you'll ask again at the next visit.
- **Assess** interest in quitting. "Are you interested in quitting in the next two weeks? I can help you." If the patient is ready to quit soon, talk with the patient to establish a date to quit smoking.
- **Assist** with quitting. **Recommend/prescribe the use of FDA-approved medications.** Explain how these medications increase quitting success and reduce withdrawal symptoms. Medications include: bupropion SR (Zyban), varenicline (Chantix), nicotine gum, nicotine inhaler, nicotine lozenge, nicotine nasal spray and nicotine patch. For a one-page chart of medications and their use, see fact sheet #5 of this Treating Tobacco Use Series.



Refer patient to the free Wisconsin Tobacco Quit Line at (1-800-QUIT-NOW or 1-800-784-8669) for free help with making a quit plan, coaching, support and quit tips. It's sponsored by the Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services. You can order free Wisconsin Tobacco Quit Line cards, bookmarks (English, Spanish, Hmong) and brochures to give to your patients by logging on to: www.ctri.wisc.edu/quitline

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- Arrange follow up. Ask how the quit attempt is going at the next visit. Praise the patient for quitting. Make it relevant to the individual - "I see the discoloration of your teeth has decreased and your gums are healthier than when you were using tobacco." In the patient record, list 'tobacco cessation discussed' and any medications recommended or prescribed. Use the ADA code 1320 to indicate that this is for the control and prevention of oral disease.



Sample: Health History Tobacco Use Questionnaire

1. Do you use any form of tobacco? Yes No (If no, skip to question 2)

1a. What type? Circle all that apply:

- a) cigarettes b) spit/chew tobacco c) cigars d) pipe e) other

1b. How many times a day? _____

1c. For how long? _____

1d. Are you interested in quitting at this time? Yes No

2. Are you a former tobacco user? Yes No

If yes, please explain: _____

