

for Dental Professionals

Scripts for Discussing Tobacco Use and Quitting with Patients

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Determine if the patient uses tobacco.

“Do you use tobacco in any form?”

If Yes: “How many cigarettes per day do you smoke?”
“How many cigars per day do you smoke?”
“How many bowls of pipe tobacco do you use per day?”
“How many tins/pouches do you chew?”

If No: “Have you ever used tobacco in the past?”

For the patient who currently uses tobacco:

Provide clear, strong, personalized messages advising the patient to quit:

- “Have you thought about quitting?”
- “I would like to show you some changes in your mouth caused by tobacco use.”
- “I know quitting tobacco is very difficult. Many people are successful with medication and coaching.”
- “The most important thing you can do to improve your overall health and your teeth is to quit using tobacco. I can help you.”
- “Let me give you the phone number for the free, confidential Wisconsin Tobacco Quit Line. It’s **1-800-QUIT-NOW** (1-800-784-8669). You can receive coaching on how to quit and free medications. This can quadruple your chances of quitting. They won’t judge you; they’ll support you. Tobacco quit lines have successfully helped thousands of callers quit.”
- “Sometimes it takes more than one try. I know you can do it.”

For pregnant women:

- “My best advice for you and your baby is for you to quit smoking.”
- “As your dental hygienist/dentist, I need you to know that quitting smoking is the most important thing you can do for your health and to protect your baby.”

For youth:

- “Tobacco use stains teeth and wrinkles skin.”
- “Did you know that most young people do not smoke? I can help you quit.”
(**1-800-QUIT-NOW** or 1-800-784-8669)

(more)

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For hygienists/dentists who used to smoke:

- Determine if the patient will benefit from your personal testimonial.
- Use discretion to determine if this is appropriate.
- Use your own words. “I empathize with you. It took me several attempts at quitting before I was successful. I know it’s difficult. I found it is much easier to quit with assistance, such as medications and coaching.” (**1-800-QUIT-NOW** or 1-800-784-8669)

Ask about tobacco users in household:

- “Do others in your household use tobacco? Who? Will they consider smoking outside or quitting with you?”

For patients who never used tobacco:

- Congratulate the patient and encourage continued abstinence: “Congratulations, you have made a wise decision to protect your teeth--and your overall health.”

For patients who relapse:

- Congratulate the patient for attempting to quit. “You did great just by trying to quit. Quitting is very difficult, and many succeed after multiple tries. Don’t give up; you can do it.”

For patients who quit using tobacco:

- Congratulate the patient and encourage continued cessation: “Congratulations, you made a wise decision to protect your teeth--and your overall health.”
- If you need help getting through a craving, there are some good programs to help you remain tobacco-free. I can give you the contact information for the Wisconsin Tobacco Quit Line. It’s **1-800-QUIT-NOW**.”

Wisconsin Tobacco Quit Line **1-800-QUIT-NOW** (1-800-784-8669)

- Free, confidential, non-judgmental coaching and information about quitting for dental providers and patients.
- Quit coaches help each tobacco user develop an individualized quit plan, including selecting a quit date. Callers can finish with the first call, or request a program in which a quit coach initiates four future calls at a time specified by the caller.
- The Quit Line also mails callers a free quit guide with information about quitting methods, medications and other tips. Callers can get information on local programs as well.