

Relapse Prevention

Description: Working to prevent relapse.

Congratulate ex-tobacco users on any success and encourage them to remain abstinent at every clinic visit after they quit. Tobacco dependence is a chronic, progressive, relapsing disease and requires long-term effort as does hypertension, diabetes, or other chronic diseases and conditions. Encourage the discussion of successes and problems patients have had by using open-ended questions (e.g., "How has quitting tobacco use helped you?")

Problem	Responses
Lack of support for cessation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schedule followup visits and phone calls • Urge the patient to call the national quitline network (1-800-QUIT-NOW) or other local quitline • Help the patient identify sources of support • Refer patient to appropriate organization that offers counseling or support
Negative Mood or Depression	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If significant, provide counseling, prescribe appropriate medications, or refer the patient to a specialist
Strong or Prolonged Withdrawal Symptoms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the patient reports prolonged craving or other withdrawal symptoms, consider extending the use of an approved medication or adding or combining medications to reduce strong withdrawal symptoms
Weight Gain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommend starting or increasing physical activity; discourage strict dieting • Reassure the patient that some weight gain after quitting is common and usually is self-limiting • Emphasize the health benefits of quitting relative to the risks of modest weight gain • Emphasize the importance of a healthy diet and active life-style • Suggest low-calorie substitutes such as sugarless

	<p>chewing gum, vegetables, or mints</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Maintain the patient on medication known to delay weight gain (e.g., bupropion SR, NRTs (especially 4 mg nicotine gum and lozenge)• Refer the patient to a nutrition counselor or program
Smoking lapses	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Suggest continued use of medications, which can reduce the likelihood that a lapse will lead to a full relapse• Encourage another quit attempt or a recommitment to total abstinence.• Reassure that quitting may take multiple attempts, and use the lapse as a learning experience.• Provide or refer for intensive counseling
Flagging Motivation or Feeling Deprived	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reassure the patient that these feelings are common• Recommend rewarding activities• Probe to ensure that the patient is not engaged in periodic tobacco use• Emphasize that beginning to smoke (even one puff) will increase urges and make quitting more difficult

(Adapted from Fiore et al. 2000, 2008)