

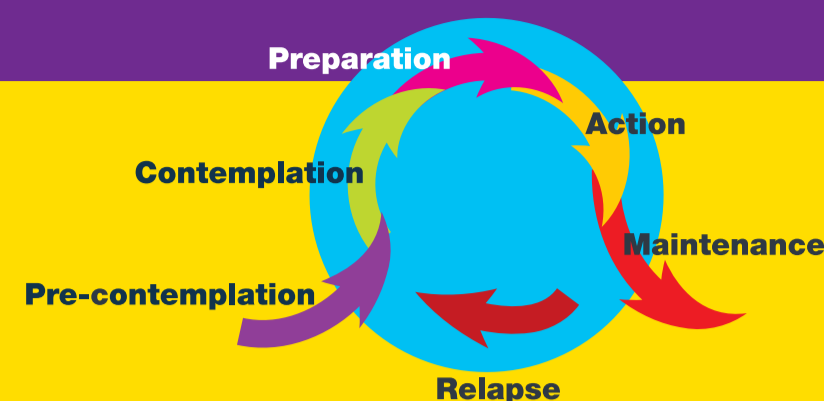
Helping smokers to stop

Brief advice offered by the primary care team can motivate smokers to try to stop smoking and increase their chances of success. Nicotine replacement therapy can be effective and, when used in conjunction with other intervention methods, approximately doubles the success rate.

Stages of change

The aim of brief intervention is to encourage the smoker to progress to the next stage in the cycle of change.

People can move through this cycle many times before they manage to change their behaviour permanently. If relapse occurs, consider why it might have happened and help the patient to work out how they might need to adapt their approach on their next attempt to give up smoking.



Stage	At this stage the patient:	What you can do:
Pre-contemplation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> has no intention of stopping smoking in the near future may believe there is no reason to change or lack motivation/confidence in their ability to change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> highlight the dangers of smoking to their health make them aware that help is available if they want it
Contemplation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> has thought about stopping but not yet committed to taking action. is aware that smoking is a problem and is weighing up the pros and cons of stopping 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> try to increase confidence in their ability to change talk through the process of stopping with them, perhaps using a leaflet (eg <i>Stopping smoking made easier</i>) highlight the importance of support (from family/friends or professionals)
Preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> intends to stop smoking sees the benefits of stopping is assessing the knowledge, skills and support they need to move into the action stage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> set a quit date draw up an action plan identify potential withdrawal symptoms and coping strategies consider if NRT could help arrange a follow up appointment or other support
Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> has made a commitment to change has identified a clear goal, realistic plan and the support needed to achieve behaviour change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> reinforce the benefits of stopping advise on coping with withdrawal or difficulties congratulate them on their success so far
Maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> has stopped smoking may need support to prevent relapse 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> congratulate them on their continuing success reinforce the danger of ever having "just one" remind them of available sources of help

Nicotine replacement therapy

Nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) is a safe and effective cessation aid if used correctly and smokers should be encouraged to try it, as it can double their chances of stopping. NRT is available in a wide range of forms which are outlined below to help you agree the most suitable form with your patient.

Type of therapy	How is it used?	Who is it suitable for?	Main contraindications
Nicotine patch	Nicotine patches slowly release a controlled amount of nicotine into the skin. Patches come in a range of strengths, to allow the dose to be stepped down over time. They are extremely convenient but you can't quickly alter the dose, for example to get more nicotine if the craving is particularly strong.	Smokers who: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> have a regular smoking pattern prefer the convenience of a patch cannot or prefer not to chew gum ideally have a low level of behavioural dependence on cigarettes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Caution on use in pregnancy or breastfeeding* Cardiovascular disease* Peptic ulcer disease Those taking medication, which may require dose adjustment
Nicotine gum	Nicotine gum can be chewed regularly to prevent cravings and withdrawal symptoms, or as and when required to relieve cravings as they occur. The taste can be strange but most people get used to it after a week or so. Smokers typically don't use enough pieces of gum - they should follow the instructions to obtain the most benefit.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4mg is recommended for highly dependent smokers (>20 cigarettes per day or smoking <20 mins after waking) 2mg is effective for medium to low dependency smokers (20 or less cigarettes per day) Gum is also suitable for smokers with an irregular smoking habit Some gums are licensed for use in pregnancy 	As for patch, plus: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oral inflammation or oesophagitis
Nicotine inhalator	This is a plastic holder with nicotine cartridges, which the smoker draws on like a cigarette. It is the only type of NRT that directly addresses the behavioural dependency of smoking (ie the hand to mouth action).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highly behaviour-dependent smokers Smokers of 20 cigarettes or less per day Licensed for use in pregnancy 	As for patch, plus: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Renal and hepatic impairment Hyperthyroidism Severe respiratory incapacity Peripheral vascular disease
Nicotine lozenges and sublingual tablets	With both of these forms, the nicotine is absorbed through the lining of the mouth. Tablets are placed under the tongue and allowed to dissolve (they should not be sucked). Lozenges are alternately sucked and held in the cheek until they dissolve. Tablets and lozenges should not be chewed or swallowed.	Smokers who: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> have an irregular smoking pattern want a discreet and flexible form of NRT Double dose sublingual tablets are suitable for highly dependent smokers	As for patch
Nicotine nasal spray	This is a small bottle of nicotine solution which is sprayed into the nose (one dose equals one spray into each nostril). Nicotine is absorbed more quickly through the nose than via other forms of NRT, but it takes more getting used to and can irritate the nose.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highly dependent smokers Smokers who experience strong cravings throughout the day Smokers who require rapid craving relief 	As for patch, plus: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chronic nasal disorders Renal or hepatic insufficiency Peripheral vascular disease

* In many countries, most or all forms of NRT are described as contra-indicated in pregnancy and in patients with heart disease, but UK guidelines recognise that the risk, if any, is much less than that from smoking and suggest use under close supervision instead.

Support materials

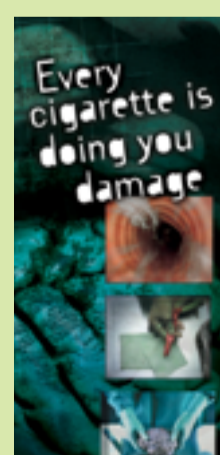
The following materials for patients are free and can be obtained from the central health promotion resource service in your local Health and Social Services Board area.



Booklet



Booklet



Leaflet



Wallet card

Smoking cessation coordinators

The smoking cessation coordinator in your local Health and Social Services Board area can provide details of specialist smoking cessation services available for your patients. They can also advise you on training opportunities in relation to smoking cessation.

Eastern Board area 028 9055 3963
Northern Board area 028 2531 1169
Southern Board area 028 3741 4557
Western Board area 028 8225 3951

Smokers' Helpline – 0800 85 85 85

Smokers can call the Smokers' Helpline on 0800 85 85 85 any day between 12 noon and 10pm.

Calls are free and the helpline staff are trained to provide friendly help and advice to smokers who want to stop.

The helpline staff can also advise smokers of any specialist cessation services available in their local area.