



Break the Habit

A Pharmacist's Toolkit for Smoking Cessation Counselling

Quick Tips for Providing Behavioural Supports

Individualize

Collect a thorough past medical history and ask about beliefs, values and preferences

- While learning the patient's beliefs, values and preferences:
 - Develop rapport: Ask about family members, occupation and hobbies; avoid asking questions in a checklist format
 - Ask directly: "What are your health goals?"
"What do you hope to gain from quitting smoking?"
"How do you see this impacting your life?"



Communicate

Offer multiple methods of contact: Text, call, phone, in person, email—encourage the patient to choose a method of communication that suits them best based on their individual needs or preferences.

PRACTICE POINT:

Be sure to follow federal and provincial guidelines regarding privacy when communicating via text and email.

Provide information

Focus on providing information around withdrawal symptoms, triggers, coping strategies and stress reduction

WITHDRAWAL SYMPTOMS:

Set appropriate expectations and equip patients with information on how to manage their withdrawal symptoms. See "My care plan" for further information.

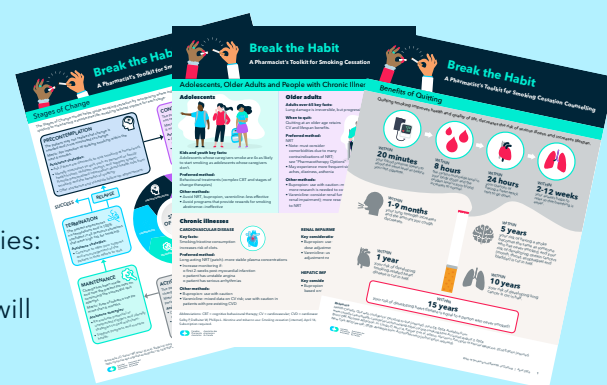
TRIGGERS:

Provide guidance on how to self-reflect to identify triggers. Help patient develop a game plan for responding to triggers. See "Tips to SET yourself up for success" for further information.

COPING STRATEGIES/ STRESS REDUCTION:

Work with the patient to formulate their ACE strategies:

- Avoid: Try not to enter situations that you know will substantially increase the temptation to smoke
- Change: In situations you can't avoid, make adjustments that reduce the temptation to smoke



- Escape: Have a method for politely leaving situations that are tempting you to smoke

Be supportive

Utilize supportive strategies at each point of contact:

- Tell the patient that you believe they have the ability to quit
- Encourage the patient by reminding them they are not quitting alone
- Highlight that each attempt to quit is a learning opportunity
- Share that it often takes multiple quit attempts to remain smoke-free



Park ER. Behavioral approaches to smoking cessation [internet]. UpToDate. Available from: <https://www.uptodate-com.proxy.lib.uwaterloo.ca/contents/behavioral-approaches-to-smoking-cessation>. Subscription required. Accessed April 13, 2026.

Selby P, DeRuiter W, Phillips L. Nicotine and tobacco use: Smoking cessation [internet]. April 16, 2026. Available from: CPS (<https://cps.pharmacists.ca>). Subscription required.