

Talking to Teens About Tobacco Cessation Using the 5As

Ask the Right Questions

- Ask teen patients about their tobacco use in the context of routine screening
- Ask about use of traditional and alternative tobacco products, using words that teens will understand
- Ask about tobacco and e-cigarette use among their family and friends

“Do you use any tobacco products, like cigarettes, chewing tobacco, or hookah?”

“Do you use any vaping products, like e-cigarettes or JUUL?”

“Do your friends use tobacco or vaping products?”

Advise against tobacco use

- If the teen is using tobacco, even once in awhile, talk with him or her about stopping. Messages should:
 - **Be Clear:** Explain that smoking or using e-cigarettes will cause nicotine addiction. Explain that stopping tobacco use is an important way to protect one’s health, and let the teen know you can help.
 - **Be Personalized:** Explain how quitting tobacco might benefit the teen’s other interests. For example, it can improve athletic performance, or allow the teen to save money to spend on hobbies or activities.
 - **Resonate with Teens:** Explain that quitting tobacco is good for one’s health, and helps avoid things like bad breath, stained teeth, prematurely wrinkled skin, or smelling like smoke. Explain that quitting makes a teen more independent, because he or she is no longer addicted to nicotine.
 - **Counteract the Tobacco Industry’s Lies:** Explain that the tobacco industry targets teens by making tobacco seem cool or attractive. Counter these lies with the truth: tobacco is harmful and takes away a teen’s independence.

Assess readiness to quit

- Ask the teen if he or she is interested in quitting tobacco use

Assist: If a Teen is Ready to Quit

- Help the teen set a quit date within two weeks. Avoid major stressors, such as final exams.
- Anticipate challenges and identify strategies for success, such as coping with withdrawal symptoms, handling situations that raise the risk of tobacco use, and finding social support from family and friends
- Provide resources to help the teen quit tobacco successfully, such as behavioral counseling, the National Cancer Institute’s SmokefreeTXT, teen.smokefree.gov, and 1 800 QUIT NOW.
- If the teen demonstrates severe tobacco dependence or has withdrawal symptoms, consider off-label use of tobacco dependence treatment medications effective in adults.
- DO NOT recommend e-cigarettes. E-cigarettes prolong nicotine addiction and increase progression to tobacco dependence in adolescents. They are not an effective tobacco dependence treatment.

Assist: If a Teen is Not Ready to Quit

- Discuss the 5 Rs:
 - Relevance of quitting
 - Risks of not quitting
 - Rewards related to quitting
 - Roadblocks that may arise
 - Repetition: it may take several quit attempts to succeed
- Use examples that are personally relevant to the teen.
- Offer encouragement, and ask them start thinking about stopping
- Assure them that you are there to help when they’re ready to stop

Arrange a Follow-up Discussion

- Talk with the teen by phone, text, email or in the office to see how the quit attempt is going. Relapse is common, and support from a provider can help the teen learn from relapse and lead to eventual success.