

Helping clients to stop smoking: a guide for alcohol and other drug workers

Smoking is the leading cause of preventable death and disease in Australia.^{1,2}

The benefits of quitting are significant:

from increasing likelihood of achieving alcohol and other drug (AOD) recovery goals³, immediately lowering risk of physical health problems⁴, improving mental health and wellbeing^{5,6}, and less financial stress.

This guide provides information on how to deliver the most efficient and effective stop smoking intervention for your clients.

It is based on research evidence and is informed by consultations with the AOD sector, the Victorian Alcohol and Drug Association, and leaders in smoking cessation care.

Embedding brief advice into routine practice

Population surveys show, repeatedly, that more than four in five smokers want to quit. Every conversation in which an AOD worker advises a client to quit smoking, will increase the chances of that client making a successful quit attempt.

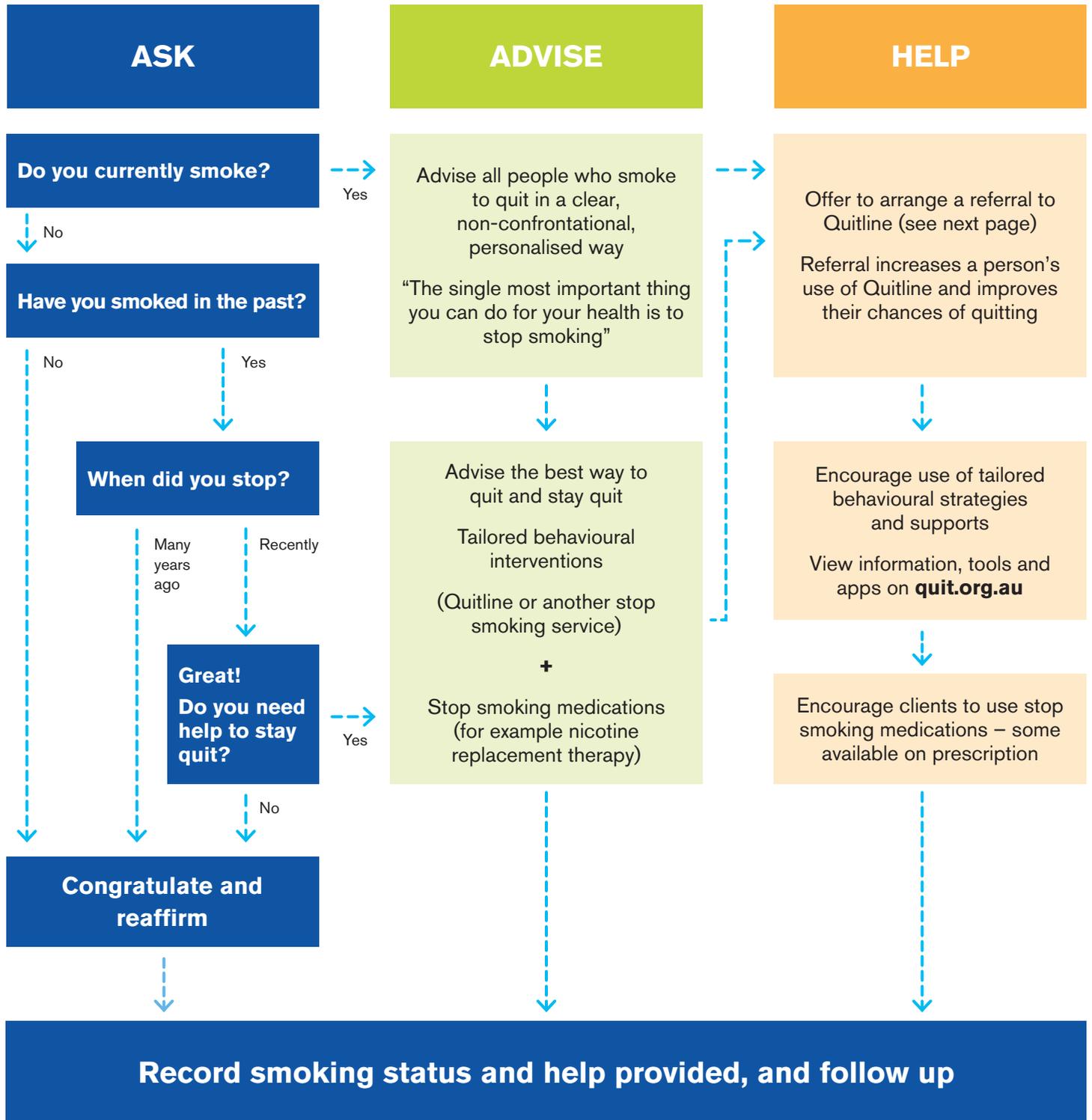
While many clients are asked about smoking, few receive practical help.

Quit worked with health professionals to develop the 3-step model (Ask, Advise, Help) overleaf. It can take as little as 3–5 minutes to deliver.

Brief advice combined with a behavioural intervention and pharmacotherapy, if appropriate, gives your client the best chance of stopping smoking.⁷

Supporting a client to stop smoking at the same time as treating their dependence on alcohol and/or other drugs will improve their long-term AOD recovery upon leaving treatment by up to 25%.³

3-step brief advice for smoking cessation



Behavioural intervention

Refer to Quitline 13 7848

Quitline is a welcoming, confidential and effective telephone counselling service.⁸ It provides ongoing tailored counselling to help people plan, make and sustain a quit attempt. Quitline will assess your client's smoking history, provide motivational interviewing and help your client develop a plan to stop smoking. Return calls are scheduled to encourage your client to set a quit date and to develop skills to manage the nicotine withdrawal period (day 1, day 3, day 7) and to maintain a smokefree lifestyle (approximately 14 days and 30 days quit). Quitline has tailored programs for people who are dependent on alcohol and other drugs, people living with a mental illness, pregnancy, and young people. Quitline also has Aboriginal Quitline counsellors available.

Making a referral to Quitline has a number of benefits:

- Improves access to treatment** – one study found a 13-fold increase in the proportion of smokers enrolling in treatment compared to a health professional simply recommending that clients call Quitline.⁹ Quitline will make multiple attempts to contact your client.
- Reduces costs for your client** – it is a totally free service as Quitline calls the client.
- Increases the chance of your client quitting.**^{10,11}
- You receive feedback** from Quitline on the outcome of your referral.

How to refer to Quitline

Referral is quick and easy. Use one of the following options:

- Download the Quitline referral form from quit.org.au/referral and fax to **1800 931 739**.
- Submit a secure online referral at quit.org.au/referral.

Encourage use of behavioural strategies

If the client declines the offer of a referral to Quitline, provide self-help material and encourage use of other evidence-based behavioural strategies, such as:

- **Customised self-help:**
QuitCoach (web-based personalised program), **QuitTxt** (phone messaging help) and other client education tools and resources are available from quit.org.au
- **Self-help material:**
This should be offered as a minimum during all brief advice conversations and includes:
 - client resources, available from the **Quit website**
 - the **Quit Because You Can booklet**. It guides a person to set a quit date, identify triggers and develop a quit plan
 - an **appointment card** with the Quitline phone number and strategies to manage cravings.
This is useful if the person has declined your offer of help.

Pharmacotherapy

If you are a prescriber and want more guidance on prescribing stop smoking medications (for example nicotine replacement therapy), please see quit.org.au/generalpractice

Quit resources and training

Resources for your service

Quit has a range of resources developed in consultation with clients and service providers.

Resources include posters for display in services, reference cards for AOD workers and brochures and wallet cards for clients.

Examples include:

- 4Ds Appointment Card
- My Quit Plan
- Quit Because You Can
- Stress Cycle of Smoking



Quit resources are available to download or order from: quit.org.au/resource-order-form

Brief advice training

Quit offers online training to support AOD workers to deliver smoking cessation brief advice using Quit's 3-step **Ask, Advise, Help** model.



Visit education.quit.org.au to access Quit's training.

References

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