Here’s How You Can Help Your Pregnant Patient Quit Smoking

Provided by The National Partnership to Help Pregnant Smokers Quit
A program of The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
Quitting smoking is the most important action a pregnant woman can take to ensure the health of her baby. The U.S. Surgeon General has reported that eliminating smoking during pregnancy could prevent 10 percent of all infant deaths due to perinatal conditions.

As a health care provider, you now have an enormous opportunity to improve the health of mothers and their babies by helping pregnant smokers quit. An easy-to-implement, evidence-based clinical counseling approach has recently been developed. Its use can double or triple quit rates among pregnant smokers. The approach involves providing your patients with a 5 to 15 minute counseling session and pregnancy-specific self-help materials.

This evidence based approach – called the “5 A’s” – has been recommended by the U.S. Public Health Service in its “Treating Tobacco Use and Dependence Clinical Practice Guideline,” and by The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. The “5 A’s” is effective for most pregnant smokers, including low-income women, the group most likely to smoke during pregnancy.
The evidence-based counseling method follows five steps (the “5 A's”):

**Ask** your patient about her smoking status;

**Advise** her in a clear, strong and personalized manner about the risks of smoking and the benefits of quitting for herself and her fetus;

**Assess** her willingness to make a quit attempt within the next thirty days;

**Assist** her with ways to quit by: suggesting problem-solving methods and skills for quitting, providing support as part of the treatment, helping her arrange support among family, friends and co-workers, and providing pregnancy-specific cessation materials;

**Arrange** follow-up contacts with her to assess smoking status, encourage smoking cessation if she continues to smoke, and refer her to more intensive help if needed.

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We’re Here to Support You

The National Partnership to Help Pregnant Smokers Quit is a coalition of diverse organizations that have joined forces to improve the health of this and future generations by increasing the number of pregnant smokers who quit smoking. We are working to improve smoking-cessation rates during and after pregnancy through partnerships with physicians and other providers of prenatal care, and through changes in health care systems. Our aim is to provide you with assistance to help your pregnant patients quit smoking, and quit for good.

This brochure contains information on programs, services and products that can help you incorporate the proven “5 A's” into your routine care of pregnant women. We invite you to use these materials when counseling your pregnant patients who smoke, or to contact The National Partnership to Help Pregnant Smokers Quit at 919-843-7663 or [www.helppregnantsmokersquit.org](http://www.helppregnantsmokersquit.org) for further information.
Materials to Help You Help Your Patients

Research Findings / Clinical Practice Guidelines


This four-page bulletin outlines an office-based protocol on how to identify pregnant patients who smoke and provide effective treatment to increase quit rates. Essential elements of the intervention are described, including how to ask about smoking status and how to provide cessation counseling during a routine prenatal office visit. The bulletin also includes information on the epidemiology of smoking during pregnancy, treatment issues pertaining to pregnant women who smoke heavily, smoking reduction, pharmacotherapy, health care support systems, and physician coding for this intervention.

A single copy of the brochure is available without charge by emailing The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists Resource Center at resources@acog.org. Please include your name, affiliation, and mailing address with your request. Packages of 25 brochures may be purchased from the ACOG Distribution Center (800-762-ACOG x882) or online at www.acog.org in the ACOG Bookstore under Patient Education.


Smoking during pregnancy is the most modifiable risk factor for poor birth outcome. This new educational
program provides the background and tools necessary for clinicians to implement an effective, evidence-based intervention called the “5 A’s” in the office. It includes:

- Monograph that describes the “5 A’s” and how to integrate the “5 A’s” into routine prenatal care.

- Photocopy-ready office tools, such as an intervention documentation flow sheet for a patient's medical record, a quick-reference card on how to ask about smoking status, and a checklist and role assignment chart for launching the “5 A’s” in any practice setting.

- Case studies that lay out eight clinician/patient scenarios. Each interaction includes dialogue and key points to consider when counseling women who smoke.

- Patient education workbook, “Need Help Putting Out that Cigarette?” Developed by Smoke-Free Families, this 28-page pregnancy-specific self-help booklet includes benefits of quitting for mother and baby, ways to prepare to quit, setting a quit date, how to handle “slips,” and tips for after the baby is born.

A single copy of the manual is available without charge by emailing The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists at smoking@acog.org. Please include your name, affiliation, and mailing address with your request. Program coordinators and trainers may request multiple copies of the manual by emailing smoking@acog.org. Please type “PROGRAM” in the subject line of the email and include a summary of the training or dissemination activity, target audience, faculty, and date/location of the event.

The pocket guide includes the “5 A’s,” a multiple-choice questionnaire providers can use to ascertain smoking status, and provides tips for counseling pregnant smokers. A single copy of the guide is available without charge by emailing The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists Resource Center at resources@acog.org. Please include your name, affiliation, and mailing address with your request. Packages of 10 guides may be purchased from the ACOG Distribution Center (800-762-ACOG x882) or online at www.acog.org in the ACOG Bookstore under Patient Education.


This flow sheet provides a convenient way for providers to record a pregnant woman’s smoking status and the cessation counseling that is provided to her throughout her pregnancy. Copies are available at www.smoke-freefamilies.org or www.helppregnantsmokersquit.org.


Slide topics include: the epidemiology of smoking during pregnancy, a demographic profile of pregnant smokers, and a description of the evidence-based intervention for treating tobacco use during pregnancy. Slide sets from recent conference presentations are also available for review and download.

These slides are available at www.smokefreefamilies.org or www.helppregnantsmokersquit.org.

This guide summarizes the strategies for providing appropriate treatments for every patient. It is available at the following website: www.surgeongeneral.gov/tobacco/-tobaqrg.htm. Printed copies of “Treating Tobacco Use and Dependence” are available from any of the following Public Health Service clearinghouses: the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (800-358-9295); Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (800-CDC-1311); and the National Cancer Institute (800-4-CANCER).

7) An annotated bibliography on various topics related to smoking during pregnancy produced by Smoke-Free Families.

These routinely updated bibliographies can be found at www.smokefreefamilies.org or www.helppregnantsmokersquit.org.


The papers in this supplement detail the research findings of projects funded by The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation’s Smoke-Free Families program. As a collection of conceptual overviews, review articles, and empirical studies on the subject of smoking during pregnancy and the postpartum period, this body of work represents important new material to add to the knowledge base of what might be the most effective, efficient, and easy-to-disseminate interventions for promoting smoke-free families and pregnancies.

These papers are available in PDF version at www.smokefreefamilies.org or www.helppregnantsmokersquit.org.

9) “Tobacco Use Treatment for Reproductive Age and Pregnant Women: A Virtual Mini-Fellowship,” to be developed and produced by the Interactive Media Laboratory, Dartmouth Medical School, in collaboration with Smoke-Free Families, The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality and The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

This package will include an interactive CD and other learning materials. Release is scheduled for 2003.
Patient Education Materials

1) “Need Help Putting Out that Cigarette?” Developed by Smoke-Free Families.

A self-help booklet for pregnant smokers that includes benefits for the pregnant smoker and her baby, ways to prepare to quit, setting a quit date, how to handle “slips” and tips for after the baby is born.

A single copy of the booklet is available without charge by emailing The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists Resource Center at resources@acog.org. Please include your name, affiliation, and mailing address with your request. Packages of 10 booklets may be purchased from the ACOG Distribution Center (800-762-ACOG x882) or online at www.acog.org in the ACOG Bookstore and looking under Patient Education.

This booklet can also be downloaded from www.smokefreefamilies.org or www.helppregnantsmokersquit.org. Print-ready files can also be requested by calling Smoke-Free Families at 919-843-7663.

2) “You Can Quit Smoking: Support and Advice from Your Prenatal Care Provider” Tear Sheet. Produced by the U.S. Public Health Service and Smoke-Free Families.

This one-pager, available in tear-off pads of 50, is intended for use in providers’ offices to counsel pregnant smokers to quit. The information is taken from “Treating Tobacco Use and Dependence,” a Public Health Service Clinical Practice Guideline.

Free copies of the tear sheet are available at www.smokefreefamilies.org or www.helppregnantsmokersquit.org, and/or by contacting: Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (800-358-9295); Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (800-CDC-1311); or National Cancer Institute (800-4-CANCER).

The “Pregnant Smokers Quit Line Protocol” guides telephone counseling for pregnant women who are currently smoking or who have recently quit smoking in anticipation of their pregnancy or after learning that they are pregnant.

The “Quit Line Protocol” is available for free at www.smokefreefamilies.org or www.helppregnantsmokersquit.org.

4) Quit Lines for Pregnant Smokers.

Find a comprehensive list of quit line numbers available nationally and by state at www.smokefreefamilies.org or www.helppregnantsmokersquit.org.

5) “The Facts About Pregnancy and Smoking” and/or “Deje De Fumar; Para Que su Bebe Nazca Sano.” Developed by the March of Dimes.

Smoking during pregnancy not only harms the pregnant woman, it can be dangerous for her baby and cause low birthweight. This pamphlet also discusses risks to the baby’s health, tips on quitting, and ways to avoid secondhand smoke. It is available in English and in Spanish.
