

# Counseling Patients To Quit

Effective smoking cessation counseling can be divided into practical and supportive counseling advice.

<i>Practical counseling advice (problemsolving/ skills training)</i>	<i>Examples</i>
<p><b>Recognize danger situations.</b> Identify events, internal states, or activities that increase the risk of smoking or relapse.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Negative affect</li> <li>• Being around other smokers</li> <li>• Drinking alcohol</li> <li>• Experiencing urges</li> <li>• Being under time pressure</li> </ul>
<p><b>Develop coping skills.</b> Identify and practice coping or problem-solving skills. Typically, these skills are intended to cope with danger situations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning to anticipate and avoid temptation</li> <li>• Learning cognitive strategies that will reduce negative moods</li> <li>• Accomplishing lifestyle changes that reduce stress, improve quality of life, or produce pleasure</li> <li>• Learning cognitive and behavioral activities to cope with smoking urges (e.g., distracting attention)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Provide basic information.</b> Provide basic information about smoking and successful quitting.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Any smoking (even a single puff) increases the likelihood of full relapse</li> <li>• Withdrawal typically peaks within 1-3 weeks after quitting</li> <li>• Withdrawal symptoms include negative mood, urges to smoke, and difficulty concentrating</li> <li>• Smoking is addictive</li> </ul>
<i>Supportive counseling advice</i>	<i>Examples</i>
<p><b>Encourage the patient in the quit attempt.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communicate belief in the patient's ability to quit</li> <li>• Note that effective tobacco dependence treatments are now available</li> <li>• Note that half of all people who have ever smoked have now quit</li> </ul>
<p><b>Communicate caring and concern.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask how the patient feels about quitting</li> <li>• Directly express concern and willingness to help</li> <li>• Be open to the patient's expression of fears of quitting, difficulties experienced, and ambivalent feelings</li> </ul>
<p><b>Encourage the patient to talk about the quitting process.</b></p>	<p>Ask about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reasons the patient wants to quit</li> <li>• Concerns or worries about quitting</li> <li>• Success the patient has achieved</li> <li>• Difficulties encountered while quitting</li> </ul>

