



# Supporting workers to quit smoking

Supporting workers to quit smoking is one of the most effective actions a workplace can take to improve worker's health. There are also plenty of business benefits, including reduced costs, increased productivity and a healthy, positive image for your workplace.

While at first it might seem that many aren't interested, research shows that most smokers want to be non-smokers.

**An overwhelming majority of smokers want to quit. Over a one year period, about 75% of smokers will try to change their smoking behaviour by making either a quit attempt or reducing the amount that they smoke.<sup>1</sup>**

## Strategies for providing smoking cessation support

### 1. NSW Quitline 13 7848 (13 QUIT)

NSW Quitline is a free, confidential and individually tailored telephone service to assist smokers in the process of quitting smoking. Quitline advisors have specialist training to support smokers with preparing to quit, avoiding slip-ups and staying quit.

Callers to the NSW Quitline can receive a free 'Quit Kit', talk to an advisor or choose to join the free call-back service. NSW Aboriginal Quitline also provides culturally sensitive support to assist smokers to quit. If you require advice in a language other than English, NSW Quitline provides multilingual advisors in Arabic, Vietnamese and Chinese (Cantonese/Mandarin).

You can support workers to quit smoking by allowing them to call Quitline (or arrange to be contacted by Quitline) during work hours.

### 2. Provide information and self-help materials

Support workers to quit smoking by providing them with information on the health benefits of quitting, smoking cessation services, quitting methods, understanding triggers and preventing relapse.

Provide workers with this information by:

- Displaying posters and factsheets on message boards and in common areas (Download a resource order form from [www.icanquit.com.au](http://www.icanquit.com.au)).
- Include articles on quitting smoking in your staff newsletters and staff emails.
- Order Quit Kits from NSW Quitline (Call 13 7848 or visit [www.icanquit.com.au](http://www.icanquit.com.au)) and distribute to workers who want to quit smoking.
- Refer workers to local smoking cessation support services, telephone counselling and support groups.
- If needed, download resources from the **Multicultural Communications** website.

### 3. Nicotine Replacement Therapy

Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT) is a safe and effective way to quit smoking. NRT has a measured amount of nicotine to help wean smokers off their addiction and reduce nicotine withdrawal symptoms and cravings. Research indicates that NRT can increase the chances of quitting smoking by 50 - 70% compared to unassisted quitting.<sup>2</sup>

A range of NRT products are available including patches, gum, lozenge, mouth spray, oral strip, and inhaler.

NRT is available over the counter and some NRT patches are available at a cheaper price on prescription through the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS). Visit the **PBS website** or call the PBS Information Line on 1800 020 613 for more details.

NRT can have side-effects and may not be suitable for everyone. It is important that smokers discuss their NRT requirements with their doctor or pharmacist. Support workers to do this by allowing flexible working arrangements or time off for appointments.

### 4. Non-nicotine medication

There are currently two non-nicotine medications available in Australia to help people stop smoking:

- **Zyban**<sup>®</sup>: An oral prescription drug to reduce cravings and other withdrawal symptoms.
- **Champix**<sup>®</sup>: An oral prescription drug that reduces withdrawal symptoms and reduces the satisfying effects of smoking.

Smokers should always talk to their doctor about the appropriateness of these medications. They are not suitable for all smokers and some have serious side-effects.

Provide flexible working arrangements to encourage workers to speak to their doctor to help decide which product is best for them.

**If you are addicted to nicotine and use medications as prescribed, you can double your chances of quitting successfully by getting some support.**

### 5. Smoking cessation interventions and workplace training

Smoking cessation interventions and workplace training to help workers quit smoking is available in NSW. The service can be tailored to meet your organisation's requirements. Services include:

- Smoking policy advice
- Seminars on quitting smoking
- Support quit groups

- Advice and counselling on quitting smoking
- Smoking cessation training
- Attendance at workshops and health fairs.

Providing training for Health & Wellbeing staff or Occupational Health & Safety staff in Smoking Cessation Skills or Group Behaviour Therapy can also be helpful.

For more information and to book workplace training, please contact [enquiries@quiteducation.com.au](mailto:enquiries@quiteducation.com.au).

### 6. Websites and smartphone apps

Provide workers with links to a number of websites and mobile applications for information and support.

#### *iCanQuit website*

Promote the **iCanQuit** website ([www.icanquit.com.au](http://www.icanquit.com.au)) - an online support community providing resources, discussion forums and stories from people who have successfully quit smoking. Online 'Quit Kits' can also be downloaded for free.

#### *Quit Coach*

Promote **QuitCoach** - a free online tool developed to assist smokers to quit and stay smoke free. By answering questions about smoking habits and lifestyle, **QuitCoach** will provide useful ideas and suggestions. Visit [www.quitcoach.org.au](http://www.quitcoach.org.au).

#### *My QuitBuddy app*

Encourage workers to download **My QuitBuddy** - a free, personalised app to help quit smoking. Smokers can set their own goals, record their reasons for quitting, and include photos and recordings of loved ones. Participants receive motivational tips and can share success stories and celebrate milestones. **My QuitBuddy** is available for download on Apple, Windows and Android smart phones. More information is available at [www.quitnow.gov.au/internet/quitnow/publishing.nsf/Content/quit-buddy](http://www.quitnow.gov.au/internet/quitnow/publishing.nsf/Content/quit-buddy).

### More information to support workers to quit smoking

Refer to the following *Get Healthy at Work* resources for **People, Place** and **Policy** actions to support workers to quit smoking:

- Sample Action Plan: Smoking
- Actions Booklet
- *Get Healthy at Work* online training module: Smoking.

<sup>1</sup> Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. National Drug Strategy Household Survey detailed report: 2013. Tobacco chapter. Online data tables. Table 3.14: Changes to smoking behaviour, smoker(s) aged 14 years or older, by sex, 2007 to 2013 2014. Available from <http://aihw.gov.au/WorkArea/DownloadAsset.aspx?id=60129549644>.

<sup>2</sup> Stead LF, Perera R, Bullen C, Mant D, Hartmann-Boyce J, Cahill K, Lancaster T. Nicotine replacement therapy for smoking cessation. Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews 2012, Issue 11. Art. No.: CD000146. DOI: 10.1002/14651858.CD000146.pub4.

For more details visit [gethealthyatwork.com.au](http://gethealthyatwork.com.au)