

ELEPHANT

Part 1 – Managers of health care services

As a manager you may be responsible for introducing the ABC into your service and in practice you will need to consider the social, cultural, organisational barriers and factors which may influence the introduction of ABC. It is so important to understand the barriers to the introduction of ABC.

Tobacco dependence

Most people start smoking in adolescence, usually due to social factors such as peer pressure. Experimentation is common and although many young people do not progress past a few puffs, regular smoking can quickly follow.

Regular smoking is due primarily to dependence on nicotine. Cigarette smoke is highly effective in transporting nicotine to the lungs where it is rapidly absorbed into the blood and transported to the brain. Nicotine produces a number of rewarding effects on the brain. Therefore, when people go without tobacco a number of mood and physical symptoms can develop. Many smokers experience these withdrawal symptoms, but they can be lessened with behavioural support and stop-smoking medicines.

Barriers to implementing the ABC pathway

Part 2 – All health care workers

As a health care worker your role is to help people to stop smoking and to help them to access the support and services they need to do so.

The ABC pathway for helping people to stop smoking

Making an offer of cessation support

Make an offer

Strongly encourage every person who smokes to use cessation support.

available (eg, referral to Quitline or a local stop-smoking service, or stop-smoking medication) and

access it.



Providing behavioural support

All stop-smoking services should be operated and monitored in accordance with the Ministry of Health's Tier One Service Specification.

When delivering behavioural support, evidence suggests that people need at least four follow-up contacts to have their best chance of stopping smoking. The following techniques should be used during those contacts to help people during their quit attempt.²

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Nicotine replacement therapy (NRT)

- NRT provides some of the nicotine that a person would have otherwise received from tobacco, and in doing so reduces the person's urge to smoke.
- There are five different NRT products available in New Zealand, including the patch, gum, lozenges, inhalator and mouth spray.
- All NRT products roughly double a person's chance of stopping compared with a placebo.
- People should use NRT for at least eight weeks.
- Using two NRT products (for example, patches and gum) is more effective than using one.
- People who need NRT for longer than 12 weeks can continue to use it.
- If the person is not ready to stop smoking straight away, NRT can be used to help reduce their smoking before they stop.

Note: The patch, gum and lozenges are subsidised if supplied on prescription or via the Quit Card Programme. Otherwise, all NRT products (including the inhalator and mouth spray) can be purchased over the counter from supermarkets or pharmacies for the normal retail price.

Nortriptyline

- Nortriptyline is an antidepressant medicine that also helps people stop smoking.
- Nortriptyline reduces the severity of tobacco withdrawal symptoms and roughly doubles a person's chance of stopping smoking long term.
- Nortriptyline is a fully funded stop-smoking medicine and is available on prescription without Special Authority.
- People should start nortriptyline at least one week before their quit date and use it for 12 weeks. The dose should be tapered at the end of treatment to avoid withdrawal symptoms that may occur.
- Before prescribing or recommending nortriptyline, check the contraindications and cautions that apply.
- Pregnant or breastfeeding women and people under the age of 18 cannot use nortriptyline.
- Common adverse effects 9.986

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