

SEE YOUR DOCTOR

Helping Doctors Help Patients Stop Smoking

(NAPSA)—To help protect you and your family from tobacco-related death and disease, researchers from Legacy®, a national public health organization dedicated to building a world where anyone can quit smoking, recommend two actions: stop smoking or never start. If you do smoke or use tobacco, speak to your doctor about quitting smoking.

A survey of more than 3,146 adults in the U.S. conducted by Legacy discovered that more than one in 10 smokers have concealed their smoking status from a health care provider—nearly half of them stated it was because they are ashamed that they smoke. Another reason for not disclosing this important information to a medical professional: two-thirds surveyed who did not disclose their smoking status reported not wanting to be lectured about smoking.

Fortunately, health care professionals such as doctors, nurses, physician assistants, nurse practitioners, dentists and pharmacists can help smokers by bringing up the subject with patients. To assist with that, Legacy and Pfizer have developed a downloadable, user-friendly guide for health care providers to help them discuss smoking and tobacco use with their patients.

Here are hints to help:

- Talk openly about smoking. Ask every patient if they smoke. This may open the door to successful intervention.

- Be positive and encouraging. Smokers are often dealing with shame or fear of quitting. Congratulate the smoker on the decision to quit and reiterate how you



Most smokers want to quit. Their doctors can help.

are there to help them on their journey.

- Encourage smokers not to give up. Smoking is a chronic, relapsing medical condition; the average smoker tries to quit 6–9 times in their lifetime. Remind smokers that quitting is difficult, but can be attainable.

- Make sure smokers understand smoking for what it really is: a treatable medical condition.

- Suggest patients consider evidence-based treatments, such as over-the-counter or prescription medications, and refer them to counseling to help them quit. Patients can call the national toll-free quitline, (800)-QUIT-NOW, for free counseling or seek help from no-cost websites such as www.BecomeAnEX.org.

- Arrange follow-up contact as necessary to try to prevent relapse. More than 45 million Americans currently smoke and an estimated 70 percent of them want to quit, but lack the tools to do so. Committing to quit is the crucial first step toward becoming smoke free. Speaking with your health care provider can help you during this process.

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