



A healthy workplace is good for business

SMOKING CESSATION SUPPORT

If any of your employees are interested in quitting smoking, there are a number of ways your organisation can support them.

Depending on what best suits your worksite, you could consider one, all, or a combination of the strategies described in this fact sheet.

Some of the strategies involve a time commitment, for example, attending Quit courses and groups, individual counselling, and medical appointments for smoking cessation consultations. You could consider offering staff paid leave to attend these sessions.

Strategies for providing smoking cessation support

I. Provide information and self-help materials

A variety of organisations offer services and information about the health benefits of being smoke-free, cessation services, quitting methods, understanding triggers, how to set a quit date, controlling stress and weight gain, and preventing relapse.

For a list of these organisations, download the following resource from the attached CD-ROM or from the *Good health. Good business.* website at www.workcover.tas.gov.au/goodhealthgoodbusiness



Where to go for more information - Smoking



You can provide this information to your employees by:

- posting flyers or posters on message boards and in common areas
- distributing materials such as pamphlets, brochures and fact sheets
- including articles on the benefits of quitting and including quitting tips in staff newsletters and staff email alerts
- ordering and distributing Quit Packs to employees who want to quit smoking
- referring employees to local smoking cessation support services, telephone counselling and support groups
- promoting online smoking cessation support services.



2. Smoking information sessions

Quit Tasmania offers information seminars to support employees who may want to stop smoking. For more information on this program, contact Quit Tasmania on (03) 6228 2921. These sessions help participants understand why they smoke, the health effects of smoking, the benefits of quitting and quitting strategies, resistance techniques and coping strategies.

3. Telephone counselling

Telephone counselling provides individual counselling on smoking behaviour, addiction and methods of cessation and relapse prevention. The Quitline (13 7848 or 13 QUIT) is a confidential telephone information and advice service, providing access to qualified counsellors. Callers can opt for the call back service and receive follow-up phone calls as required. This approach has been shown to significantly reduce relapse among quitters.

4. Quit Coach

The Quit Coach is an online program designed to prepare smokers for quitting, as well as provide assistance throughout the quitting process. Quit Coach helps smokers to understand their addiction, to know what to expect when quitting and to develop strategies to help resist cravings. Quit Coach can be accessed at www.quitcoach.org.au or through the Quit Tasmania website at www.quittas.org.au

5. Nicotine Replacement Therapy

Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT) is a safe and effective way to quit smoking. Research indicates that NRT increases the rate of long-term quitting by 50% to 70% in smokers who have high levels of nicotine dependency and who are motivated to quit.¹ NRT products alleviate withdrawal symptoms as they deliver an alternative supply of nicotine without the harmful chemicals found in cigarette smoke. While NRT products are available over the counter, NRT may not be suitable for everyone and it is recommended that those concerned about its use consult their doctor or other health professional.

Some nicotine patches are now available through the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme for up to 12 weeks a year. They are available through the scheme for the standard prescription cost for smokers who have entered into a comprehensive smoking cessation support program. Your employees would need to see their doctor to discuss this option further and obtain a prescription.



6. Non-nicotine medication

Prescription-only, non-nicotine medication has been shown to assist smoking cessation. These medications are not suitable for everyone, so your employees should discuss their individual situation with a doctor or other health professional. It is recommended that these medications are taken in combination with counselling support from a health professional or service.

In Australia, two prescription-only, non-nicotine medications are registered:

- Bupropion (Zyban) is an oral tablet which reduces the urge to smoke and reduces symptoms from nicotine withdrawal.
- Varenicline (Champix) is an oral tablet that works by reducing craving and withdrawal symptoms. It also partially inhibits the satisfying or enjoyable effects of smoking.

7. Subsidise smoking cessation costs

Consider subsidising the cost of smoking cessation products for your employees, including over-the-counter NRT, prescription NRT, other prescription medications and psychological interventions. This may assist employees to manage their withdrawal symptoms while at work. Managing these symptoms will not only ease the discomfort of your employees during work hours, it could also help them quit smoking.

A subsidised scheme might involve an employee purchasing a suitable NRT, then presenting their receipt for reimbursement of part or all of the cost of the product. Alternatively, a payment arrangement could be made with a local pharmacy for employees to purchase subsidised NRT products.

For more information on subsidising smoking cessation, download the following resource from the attached CD-ROM or from the *Good health. Good business.* website at www.workcover.tas.gov.au/goodhealthgoodbusiness



Subsidising smoking
cessation products

8. Provide access to your Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

If you have an Employee Assistance Program (EAP), the counsellors may be in a position to provide smoking cessation counselling and support. If the service is currently not able to offer this support, you could consider arranging appropriate training for EAP staff. Alternatively, you could arrange alternative support through one or more of the counsellors/psychologists across Tasmania who specialise in addictions counselling.

9. Involving local GPs and pharmacists

Inform your local GP of your intention to make your worksite smoke-free – they may be able to provide additional resources and support. Your local pharmacist may be prepared to offer on-site appointments for your employees to discuss their smoking cessation support options.





10. Celebrate World No Tobacco Day

World No Tobacco Day is held on 31 May each year. Your organisation could celebrate the day by holding an event or activity, such as:

- setting up a display or stall providing self-help materials and quitting resources
- displaying posters and distributing flyers promoting World No Tobacco Day
- promoting World No Tobacco Day via existing communication channels, such as staff newsletters and email alerts
- holding a lunch-time quit seminar
- launching your new smoke-free worksite policy or reminding staff of the existing policy
- organising an activity such as a healthy breakfast, lunch or picnic
- partnering with other local organisations that are holding World No Tobacco Day activities.

11. Identify a 'champion' to support smoking cessation

There may be an employee within your organisation who is interested in leading and supporting the smoking cessation initiative. This person would be available to employees to provide information, motivation and support to those who are interested in quitting. Ideally, this person would be a smoker (wanting to stop smoking) or an ex-smoker who is enthusiastic about smoking cessation, sincere, generally well-liked, and willing to embrace new ideas and learn about smoking cessation best practice.

Consider providing this person with training in smoking cessation support so they can pass on information, support and expertise to other employees.

Tell employees about this person, how to contact him/her, and what type of support the champion can offer them.

For further information on smoking cessation support, and for information about how to manage nicotine withdrawal in residential and inpatient facilities, you can contact the following Department of Health and Human Services advisory staff:

Statewide Cessation Coordinator (03) 6214 5719

Clinical Nurse Specialists – Smoking Cessation Program

North (03) 6336 2814 or 0407 812 847

North West (03) 6426 5406 or 0400 285 204

South (03) 6222 6835 or 0438 303 396

References

1. Stead LF, Perera R, Bullen, C, Mant, D and Lancaster, T 2008, 'Nicotine replacement therapy for smoking cessation', *Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews*, (1): DOI: 10.1002/14651858.CD000146.pub3