

Tobacco Comfort Measures and Cessation Support

Why Comfort Measures and Support?

Evidence recommends that commercial tobacco use be treated as a vital sign; identifying all patients' tobacco use status and providing comfort measures and cessation support. Inpatient admission is an important time for this as motivation to make change is higher, recovery time is enhanced and re-admission likelihood is reduced.

The Alberta Health Services' Tobacco and Smoke Free Environments Level 1 Policy prohibits the use of tobacco and tobacco-like products on AHS property including on grounds, in facilities and in vehicles, owned, operated, leased or funded by AHS. The policy also outlines the provision of comfort measures and cessation supports to clients.

The policy is in accordance with the goals of AHS' Patients First Strategy:

- Promotes respect for patients and their families by providing a safe and healthy tobacco free environment
- Enhances communication about the policy, the effects of tobacco use related to the patients treatment and recovery, and the supports available to them
- Supports a team based approach to care through the provision of pharmacotherapy comfort measures, intervention/counselling, and referral
- Improves transitions in care so that a patient's tobacco use is not negatively affecting care planning and treatment or preventing them from transitioning to continuing or long term care.

Outcomes of Interest

- *Providing Comfort Measures and Cessation Support doubles a patient's likelihood of stopping tobacco use.*

Providing Comfort Measures and Support – The Tobacco Care Pathway

The [AHS Tobacco Care Pathway](#) provides an evidence informed 5-step process for addressing tobacco use in a healthcare setting. This pathway can be adapted to any healthcare setting.

1. Patient and their visitors are informed of the AHS Tobacco and Smoke Free Environments policy. *'AHS provides a tobacco and smoke free environment so the use of tobacco and tobacco-like products is prohibited'*
2. Patient's commercial tobacco/tobacco-like product use status is identified. *'Have you used commercial tobacco or tobacco-like products in the past 30 days?'*
3. **Inpatient setting:** If current use, patient is asked if they would like withdrawal comfort. *'Would you be interested in nicotine replacement therapy or medication to keep you comfortable?'*
4. Patient is provided with a therapeutic intervention. The intervention can be brief (5A's model) or intensive.
5. Patient is provided with a referral for follow-up individual or group support (counsellor, AlbertaQuits online or HelpLine, QuitCore, primary care clinic, etc.) *'Would you be interested in a referral for follow-up or additional support?'*

