The clinical case for smoking cessation for people with cancer – Staff information

Why is smoking cessation important for people with cancer?

Smoking cessation contributes to improved prognosis, reduced treatment toxicities and improved quality of life for people with cancer.¹

How does smoking effect cancer treatment and outcomes?

People with cancer who currently smoke have¹:

- **51%** increased risk of all-cause mortality
- **61%** increased risk of cancer-related mortality
- **42%** increased risk of cancer recurrence
- Increased risk of developing a secondary primary cancer
- Poorer response to treatment
- Higher complication rates from surgery and slower recovery
- Increased treatment-related toxicity from chemotherapy and radiotherapy.

The risk of dying from cancer could be lowered by 30–40% by quitting smoking at the time of diagnosis.¹

What can I do to help patients quit smoking?

Providing an effective brief intervention only takes a few minutes and consists of the following three steps. The three steps to a brief intervention are...

- **Ask**
  Patients about their smoking status and record this information in the patient record

- **Advise**
  Patients that in addition to treatment the most important thing they can do to for their cancer treatment is to quit smoking

- **Act**
  by making a referral to NSW Quitline for smoking cessation support

Tools and resources

- Clinical guidelines
- HETI training courses
- Managing nicotine dependence: a guide for NSW Health staff
- Tools 1-10 on smoking cessation interventions, NRT and referral

References: