

TIPS FOR TALKING TO THE PERSON YOU CARE FOR ABOUT SMOKING, VAPING AND QUITTING

Smokers often report that receiving support from close others was an integral part of achieving successful cessation.¹ Why is it important to talk to the person you care for about smoking, vaping and quitting? Because tobacco smoking is the leading cause of preventable diseases and death in Australia and in 2015, smoking was responsible for more than 1 in every 8 deaths.²

In 2019:

- » It was estimated that 11.6% of adults smoked daily and among current smokers, 9.6% used e-cigarettes
- » current smokers aged 18 and over smoked an average of 12.9 cigarettes per day
- » the proportion of pack-a-day (20 cigarettes or more) smokers increased with age – where approximately 40% of smokers aged 40 years or over smoked more than 20 cigarettes per day, compared with approximately 20% of people aged 18–39
- » use of e-cigarettes reported by people aged 18 and over doubled between 2016 and 2019

It is important that health professionals include carers in discussions about smoking cessation because the nicotine withdraw symptoms and cravings will need to be managed, there may be nicotine replacement therapy or medicines a carer may need to assist with providing, and sometimes quitting can impact on other medicines or underlying conditions a person has.

Make sure you ask for support as a carer through this process – it will help give the person you care for the best chance at quitting.

The key point is there are many things you can do to help someone who is trying to quit smoking. As a carer, you have an important role to help them decide to quit, and support and encourage them once they have quit smoking. But smokers need to decide to quit because they realise it will benefit them, not because someone else wants them to.



1. Tobacco in Australia 2. AIHW

There are also other factsheets that may be useful to you as a carer:

- Myths about electronic cigarettes and nicotine vaping products
- Nicotine Replacement Therapy or Nicotine Vaping Products?
- How can I access nicotine vaping products for myself or the person I care for?
- Tips for talking to a doctor to help quit or reduce smoking
- Nicotine Vaping and Young People

Here are some strategies you can use and questions you can ask yourself.

1 Learn about addiction to smoking

Understand that quitting can be very difficult, especially in the early days. Smokers often want to stop, but part of them wants to keep smoking. Nicotine is only one of 4,000+ compounds released from burning tobacco but is the major addictive substance from tobacco use. For more information in addiction to nicotine go to the Tobacco in Australia '[Addiction](#)' webpage.

2 Ask the person you care for how they would like to be supported

Do they want to be asked regularly about their quitting? Having this conversation can help avoid extra tension down the track and allow you to give them the support they need.

Remember, the reasons people have for smoking and the things that trigger their smoking are different for everyone. If you have previously quit smoking yourself, what helped you quit may not work for the person you care for. Consider your own smoking and related behaviours before discussing theirs.

Don't become involved in arguments about smoking – disagreements only make smokers more defensive and more likely to insist on their right to keep on smoking. If they slip-up, encourage them to focus on the reasons why they want to quit and how much progress they made. If they go back to full-time smoking, remember that most smokers make several attempts before they are able to stop completely – it is important to keep in contact with the person's GP to discuss options, and the Quitline can provide a lot of support.

Keep the conversation going and support them in any way they need. For more information visit the Australian Government Department of Health '[Helping someone quit](#)' webpage.

SOURCES AND FURTHER INFORMATION

- » Therapeutic Goods Administration '[Nicotine vaping products: Information for consumers](#)'
- » Healthdirect '[Quitting smoking](#)'
- » [Aboriginal Quitline](#)
- » Australian Indigenous Health/InfoNet '[Tackling Indigenous Smoking](#)' website

3 Create a smokefree environment and reduce temptations

If you live together and/or share a car, make your house and car smoke free. A lighter, an ashtray or the smell of old smoke can be enough to trigger a craving. Creating a smoke-free environment will also benefit others around you, especially children and people who have asthma or other lung conditions. This is because second-hand and third-hand smoke can be very harmful.³

Suggest going to non-smoking places and talk to the person you care for about letting their family and friends know they are trying to quit and how important this is – so that they can be supportive in this period as well and reduce smoking in front of them.

If you are a smoker, think about quitting for your own long-term health and economic benefits, and it's easier when you have a quit buddy. If you are a smoker and going to continue to smoke, will you cut down on smoking or not smoke in front of them?

Check out more tips on how to make your environment smoke-free at the Australian Government Department of Health '[Coping with quitting and staying smoke-free](#)' webpage.

4 Understand that vaping is not the solution

There are a lot of myths about e-cigarettes and nicotine vaping products. It is important as a carer that you are aware of the facts. If you have heard that e-cigarettes or vaping can help you or the person you are caring for to quit smoking, you should first speak with your doctor.

E-cigarettes and nicotine vaping products are not first-line treatments for smoking cessation. They are sometimes marketed as a way to quit smoking but there's not enough evidence to show that they help – or are safe.

Evidence suggests that people who use nicotine vaping products to quit smoking might have difficulty in then quitting vaping⁴, and people using e-cigarettes are three times more likely to smoke tobacco cigarettes than those who have not used e-cigarettes, and former smokers who use e-cigarettes are more likely to relapse and start smoking again.⁵

Australians now need a prescription to legally access nicotine vaping products, even when importing these products from overseas.

3. Tobacco in Australia
4. Cancer Council Victoria
5. ANU National Centre for Epidemiology and Population Health

REMEMBER!

Seek support from your doctor or pharmacist if you have any questions about how to help someone access nicotine vaping products or support with smoking cessation. You can also phone the **Quitline on 13 7848**.

Visit the Carer Gateway website at carergateway.gov.au/help-advice or call them on 1800 422 737 to find local services and support for carers.

All factsheets can be found at carersaustralia.com.au/medicine-safety/smoking-cessation-nicotine-products-and-e-cigarettes

