



Strategies to help you Quit Smoking

Evidence Based Information Sheets for Consumers

What is evidence based health information?

Just as a detective searches for evidence to solve a crime, so too do health professionals look for evidence to guide their practice. The detective must have evidence to support their case. In a similar fashion, the health care professional must have evidence to support their proposed course of treatment. They search for information that will help them to provide the most effective or beneficial form of care to their patients. Due to the wealth of information available to them, the process of discovering which information is the best can be difficult and time consuming. It would take an enormous amount of time for your doctor to sift through the large amounts of research and information available to them on a particular topic. This is where the Joanna Briggs Institute comes into play. We conduct the 'detective' work, providing them (and you) with the best available evidence.

Evidence Reliability

The evidence related to the topic of each consumer publication produced by the Joanna Briggs Institute is assessed for reliability and quality. We do not rate a procedure or treatment, but the evidence (or research) that is available to support it.

Evidence can play a critical role in any investigation and it is important for detectives to recognise evidence that will provide 'reliable' information to aid in the investigation. This is also the case when assessing health information, as some types of evidence are more reliable than others.

For Joanna Briggs Institute evidence based information for consumers, you can be assured that the best available evidence is utilised. If you would like more information about research and levels of evidence, please contact the Joanna Briggs Institute or visit the research page of our consumer web site.

"The procedures described in this pamphlet must only be used by people who have appropriate expertise in the field to which the procedure relates. The applicability of any information must be established before relying on it. While care has been taken to ensure that this pamphlet summarises available research and expert consensus, any loss, damage, cost, expense or liability suffered or incurred as a result of reliance on these procedures (whether arising in contract, negligence or otherwise) is, to the extent permitted by law, excluded".

What does this mean for consumers?

As consumers of health care it is important to know that your treatment is being based on the best available evidence. It is also important that you are provided with all of the information in order to have greater independence in relation to your own health care decisions and to be involved in the decision making process.

Further information

The Joanna Briggs Institute Consumer Information Program provides up to date literature reviews to ensure your information is based on the best available evidence. The Institute also produces systematic reviews and Best Practice Information sheets aimed at clinicians and health professionals. This means you are provided with the same high standard of publications based on the same information as those working directly in the field.

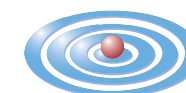
Contact details

The Joanna Briggs Institute has collaborating centres throughout Australia and overseas. If you would like more information on the Institute, its publications or wish to contact a Joanna Briggs Institute collaborating centre near you, please visit our web site:

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About Smoking

Smoking has been identified as one of the most significant causes of avoidable death and disease. Despite the increase in public knowledge about the effects of smoking on health, there are still a great number of people who continue the habit. This presents a threat to the health and well being of both active and passive smokers.

Many programs exist that encourage smokers to quit and reduce diseases related to smoking. However, it is alarming that despite the potential impact of quit programs, many smokers enter and exit the health care system every day without receiving advice about this important health risk.

So if we all know that smoking is bad for us, why do so many people still smoke?

Giving up smoking is not an easy process and many smokers will start smoking again within 3 months of quitting. Although the benefits of quitting smoking are considerable, so too is the level of commitment required to quit. It is really important to stay positive and remember why it is you decided to quit in the first place. The rewards of quitting are many. They include not only the better health and well being of yourself and those around you, but also money saving and freedom from addiction.

There are a wide range of treatment options available that are supported by quality research based evidence. Although they may be effective by themselves, programs involving several treatment options (eg. Nicotine Replacement Therapy with advice and support tailored to the individual) are even more likely to achieve success. **DONT GIVE UP ON GIVING UP!** If you find that one treatment doesn't work for you, try something else.

References

This Consumer Information Sheet has been based on an integrative review and *Best Practice* Information Sheet undertaken by the Joanna Briggs Institute under the guidance of a review panel of clinical experts.
The Joanna Briggs Institute, Smoking Cessation Interventions and Strategies for Hospitalised Patients: An Evidence Based Integrative Review. Health Promotion Unit, Royal Adelaide Hospital; 2000. (unpublished)

Strategies and Treatments

Nicotine Replacement Therapy

NRT is a popular choice for those trying to quit and is available in a variety of forms, including gum, patches, sprays, inhalers and tablets. Patches and gum are the most widely used and researched forms of NRT therapy. There is strong evidence to indicate that patches worn for 16 hours a day are as effective as those worn for 24 hours. The length of time for treatment will depend on your individual progress. However, treatment that lasts longer than 8 weeks will not increase your chances of quitting.

It should be kept in mind that while the quit rate for NRT is favourable to alternative treatments relapse is still common and where NRT has repeatedly failed alternatives should be considered.

Individual Counselling and Group Therapy

Depending on what you feel comfortable with, you may decide to be involved in some form of individual counselling or group therapy. Both forms of counselling have been shown to be highly effective and beneficial to smokers.

Aversion Therapy

Aversion therapy is a form of behaviour therapy that encourages you to associate something negative or unpleasant with smoking. The most common form of aversion therapy is rapid smoking in which the subject is directed to smoke at a significantly increased rate. Although research results favoured aversion therapy, the studies were of poor quality and this approach should be treated with caution.

Alternative Therapies

Alternative therapies to assist you to quit smoking include hypnotherapy and acupuncture. Based on the evidence, both treatments showed no significant benefit and can not be recommended to assist with quitting.

Self Help Treatment

You may choose to undertake a program to quit smoking without further assistance from a health care professional. Self help strategies may include written materials, audio or video tapes, computer programs and telephone hotlines. Disciplined self help programs have been found to be slightly more effective when tailored to the individual smoker and combined with tailored support systems.

The evidence suggests...

- Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT) should be offered as the first treatment option to help you quit smoking.
- Decisions about which form of NRT to use must be worked out according to your need, preference, tolerance, and cost considerations.
- NRT patches only need to be worn while you are awake (16 hours a day) and if treatment with patches lasts for longer than 8 weeks it does not increase your chances of quitting.
- When NRT gum is offered, 4mg gum is recommended if you are a highly dependant smoker and 2mg gum if you are a low dependancy smoker.
- NRT should be supported with advice about other strategies to help you quit.
- Where weight gain is a particular concern, NRT gum may be recommended.
- Individual counselling and group therapy are equally effective methods of helping you to quit smoking.
- If you choose self help programs, tailored support should also be offered.
- It is recommended that to 'kick' the habit, it is better to use multiple treatments rather than just one.