



Information for Patients & Caregivers

What You Need to Know if You Have Tobacco Dependence

Valid From: 24th January 2021

Date of Next Revision: 24th January 2023

+ WHAT IS TOBACCO DEPENDENCE?

Tobacco dependence is defined as dependence on any form of tobacco, including cigarettes, hookas, cigars, smokeless tobacco (e.g. chewing tobacco or snuff), shisha (water pipe), *medwakh*, and others.

~~It is a chronic relapsing disease~~ that requires the same type of treatment as other long-term conditions.

+ WHAT ARE HEALTH RISKS OF TOBACCO USE?

Cigarette smoking and the use of tobacco products can lead to a variety of ongoing complications in the body. It can also increase the risk of contracting deadly diseases.

Most common tobacco use-related causes of death include:

- Cancers (particularly lung cancer)
- Respiratory diseases
- Cardiovascular diseases
- Gastrointestinal diseases

Smoking tobacco during pregnancy, increases the risk of health problems for developing embryos and can lead to complications in pregnancy and labour, such as:

- Miscarriage
- Ectopic pregnancy
- Bleeding during pregnancy
- Premature birth
- Low birth weight

Smoking during and after pregnancy can become a cause of a sudden unexplained death of a newborn infant, which usually occurs during sleep.



Tobacco smokers are at significantly higher risk than non-smokers for post-surgical complications.

Safety of using electronic smoking devices such as e-cigarettes or e-shisha remains unknown. **These devices are banned in Qatar.**

NOTE: Use of smokeless tobacco is as addictive as smoking.

It carries significant health risks and is associated with:

- Mouth and oropharyngeal diseases, including cancers.
- Cardiovascular diseases.
- Pregnancy-related problems.

Second-hand smoke is dangerous to newborn infants.

SMOKING WHILE PREGNANT PUTS BOTH YOU AND YOUR BABY AT RISK!

NOTE: Shisha is NOT a safer alternative to cigarettes.

It contains 10-20 g of tobacco per shisha session and 5 g of charcoal. **It produces more toxic chemicals than cigarettes.**

+ WHAT ARE POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS OF SMOKING SHISHA?

Toxins in shisha can lead to harmful long-term effects:

- Decreased cardiopulmonary function
- Respiratory diseases
- Various types of cancer:
 - Lung cancer
 - Bladder cancer
 - Nasopharyngeal cancer
 - Oesophageal cancer

Smoking shisha stimulates transmission of viral and bacterial infections (including COVID-19, herpes, simplex and tuberculosis), due to sharing of either shisha mouthpiece or shisha water pipe.

THERE IS NO SAFE LEVEL OF EXPOSURE TO TOBACCO SMOKE

+ COMPLICATIONS OF SECOND-HAND SMOKE

Second-hand smoke contains substances that promote the development of cancer (*carcinogens*) and contributes to a range of cardiovascular and respiratory diseases.

Exposure of non-smoking women to second-hand smoke during pregnancy increases the risk of developing respiratory problems (including wheeze and asthma) and middle ear infections in babies.

IF YOU WANT TO QUIT SMOKING TOBACCO, TALK TO YOUR DOCTOR



+ WHAT YOUR DOCTOR NEEDS TO KNOW?

To decide which smoking cessation method will work best for you, your doctor will ask you questions. Think about your habits and answer honestly:

- How long have you been smoking tobacco?
- How old were you when started smoking tobacco?
- What type(s) of tobacco product do you use?
- How soon after you wake up do you smoke or use tobacco?
- Do you smoke more frequently during the first hours after waking than during the rest of the day?
- How much tobacco do you use per day or week (e.g. how many cigarettes)?
- When do you use tobacco the most? At what time? In what circumstances?
- Do you find it difficult to refrain from tobacco use in places where it is forbidden?
- Do you smoke if you are so ill that you are in bed most of the day?
- What obstacles can prevent you from quitting smoking?

Your doctor will give you self-help materials and may refer you to specialised stop tobacco use service.

In some cases, you may need a prescription medication for the treatment of tobacco addiction. There are some proven effective medications available:

- Bupropion.
- Varenicline.
 - Nicotine replacement therapy

Your doctor will provide all necessary information and help you to choose between them.



You can start by formulating your **STAR Plan**

S - Set a quit date: now, today, or ideally within two weeks.

T - Tell your family, friends, and co-workers about quitting. Request their understanding and support.

A - Anticipate challenges when attempting to quit smoking, particularly during the critical first few weeks.

R - Remove all tobacco products from home and workplace.

You can also think how you will cope with trigger factors and difficult times. You won't be able to avoid all of your triggers, but you can learn how to deal with them.

When a craving is triggered, it's important to have a plan to beat the urge to smoke.

Consider texting or calling somebody to get support, do something else to transfer the feeling to another activity or go to a smoke-free zone.

+ POSSIBLE PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH TOBACCO USE CESSATION

Quitting smoking may give rise to several symptoms associated with physical and psychological withdrawal. Common symptoms include:

- Concentration difficulty, insomnia, and light-headedness may last 2 weeks.
- Irritability, depression, and restlessness may last up to 1 month.
- Oral pain may be present if you used smokeless tobacco.
- Increased appetite and cravings can go on for months.

Strong urges to smoke tobacco can occur for weeks, months or even years into the future. Have a plan how to deal with them when they arise.

COMPLETELY CEASE ALL TOBACCO USE AFTER THE QUIT DATE

NOTE: Cessation of smoking tobacco usually takes several attempts.

Relapse is not a failure! It is common in the first weeks of an attempt to quit.

+ ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Additional information on the management of tobacco dependence can be found in the National Clinical Guideline published by The Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) Qatar.

The Guideline is available to the public from the MOPH website: www.moph.gov.qa

Think about benefits of quitting tobacco use and keep trying different things until you find what works best for you.