

Even After  
a Cancer  
Diagnosis

# It's Never Too Late To Assist Patients to Stop Tobacco Use



## Brief Intervention Scripts

### PATIENT RESPONSE

“What’s the point in quitting now? The harm has already been done.”

### HEALTH PROFESSIONAL RESPONSE

“I understand why you might feel this way, but it is never too late to quit. I know it’s hard, but stopping your tobacco use can improve the effectiveness of your chemotherapy and radiation treatments and may protect you from getting a second primary cancer. I can refer you to the NWT Quitline for help with quitting.”

*Provide family/patient with available information and resources.*

### RATIONALE

Addresses the myth that the damage is done and focuses on the current benefits of quitting.

“My life is too stressful to quit smoking right now.”

“This is a very stressful time for you and although smoking gives you the feeling of relieving stress, it actually puts more stress on your body. The staff at the NWT Quitline can help you find new ways to deal with stress. You can contact them directly or I can refer you.”

*Provide family/patient with available information and resources.*

Acknowledges the patient’s feelings, clarifies the myth that smoking relieves stress and provides assurance that assistance is available to help deal with the stress of the diagnosis and quitting tobacco.

# It's Never Too Late To Assist Patients to Stop Tobacco Use



## PATIENT RESPONSE

## HEALTH PROFESSIONAL RESPONSE

## RATIONALE

"I've cut down, but I don't think I can quit completely."

"It is great that you have cut down, but using any tobacco may reduce the benefit/ effectiveness of your treatment. The NWT Quitline can work with you to develop a plan to quit completely. You can contact them directly or I can refer you."

*Provide family/patient with available information and resources.*

Provides positive reinforcement for efforts to date, but encourages continuing toward cessation. Reinforces the fact that support is available.

"Now is not a good time to talk about my smoking."

"I understand that this is a very difficult time for you and that smoking may be your last concern. But, as a member of your health care team, I want to help you stay as healthy as possible and get the most out of your treatment. Stopping smoking will do that. If you aren't ready right now, I can tell you how to contact the NWT Quitline when you are ready. We can also discuss it further at your next appointment."

*Provide family/patient with available information and resources.*

Acknowledges the patient's feelings, but reinforces the importance of tobacco cessation to support cancer treatment plan. Supports patient autonomy, but leaves offer of support open.

"The last thing I need right now is a lecture about my smoking." OR "I wish people would stop nagging me about my smoking."

"I can understand that it feels like nagging, but as a member of your health care team I want to help you stay as healthy as possible and benefit the most from your treatment. Quitting is one of the most important things you can do. If you aren't ready right now, I can tell you how to contact the NWT Quitline when you are ready."

*Provide family/patient with available information and resources.*

Reinforces a nonjudgmental approach and reinforces the importance of tobacco cessation for cancer treatment.

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# It's Never Too Late To Assist Patients to Stop Tobacco Use



## PATIENT RESPONSE

"I've tried quitting  
before and it's just  
too hard."

## HEALTH PROFESSIONAL RESPONSE

"I know that quitting takes a lot of effort and it may take a few tries to be successful. Quitting is one of the most important things you can do to maximize the effectiveness of your cancer treatment. I can refer you to the NWT Quitline, you can call them when you are ready."

*Provide family/patient with available information and resources.*

## RATIONALE

Acknowledges that quitting is difficult, but stresses the importance of stopping tobacco use and the help that is available.

"I actually really  
like smoking/using  
tobacco products."

"I can appreciate that the decision to quit is a big one, but as a member of your health care team I want to help you stay as healthy as possible and benefit the most from your cancer treatment. Quitting is one of the most important things you can do. I can refer you to the NWT Quitline or you can call them when you are ready."

*Provide family/patient with available information and resources.*

Reinforces the importance of quitting for improved health and cancer treatment outcomes.