

The 5 As: Evidence-Based Smoking Cessation Counseling for Pregnant and Postpartum Women

An easy-to-implement, evidence-based clinical counseling approach, the 5 As, can double or even triple quit rates among pregnant smokers. This approach has been published by the U.S. Public Health Service in its Treating Tobacco Use and Dependence Clinical Practice Guideline, and by the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. The approach is effective for most pregnant and postpartum smokers, including low-income women, the group most likely to smoke.

Studies show that a brief counseling intervention of 5-15 minutes, when delivered by a trained health care professional and augmented with pregnancy- and/or patient-specific self-help materials, can double or, in some cases, triple smoking cessation rates among pregnant and postpartum women.

The evidence-based intervention for providers to help their pregnant and postpartum smokers quit is based on the following five steps (the 5 As):

ASK – (1minute) Ask patient about smoking status using the following structured questions:

- A. I have NEVER smoked, or have smoked LESS THAN 100 cigarettes in my lifetime.
- B. I stopped smoking BEFORE I found out I was pregnant, and I am not smoking now.
- C. I stopped smoking AFTER I found out I was pregnant, and I am not smoking now.
- D. I smoke some now, but I cut down on the number of cigarettes I smoke SINCE I found out I was pregnant.
- E. I smoke regularly now, about the same as BEFORE I found out I was pregnant.

ADVISE – (1minute) Provide clear, strong advice to quit with personalized messages about the impact of smoking on mother and fetus.

ASSESS – (1minute) Assess the willingness of the patient to make a quit attempt within the next 30 days.

ASSIST – (3 minutes+) Suggest and encourage the use of problem-solving methods and skills for cessation. Provide social support as part of the treatment. Arrange for support in the smoker's environment, such proactive referral to the state quitline. Provide pregnancy and/or patient-specific, self-help smoking cessation materials.

ARRANGE – (1minute) Periodically assess smoking status and, if she is a continuing smoker, encourage cessation.

Reference: www.YouQuitTwoQuit.com. You Quit. Two Quit. North Carolina's Program for Prenatal and Postpartum Tobacco Use Cessation