



Supporting Safer Smoking Practices & Smoking Cessation during COVID-19

Many limitations have been placed on residents/patients around accessing smoking areas during the COVID-19 pandemic. Below provides some considerations and recommendations to support decision making and clinical care in this circumstance.

1) Establishing Risk related to Smoking

Considerations:

- Can the person follow physical distancing guidelines in the smoking area?
- Are they able to properly use required personal protective equipment (PPE)? Do the PPE create a fire hazard?
- Does the individual pick up and smoke old cigarette butts?
- Does the individual share cigarettes with others?

Suggestions to Reduce Risk:

- Ensure area is closed/fenced or continue access to an approved ventilated room.
- Reinforce physical distancing guidelines through visual aids (e.g. applying coloured tape on the ground to illustrate the recommended space between individuals).
- Post signs at the door and in the smoking areas with messages such as:
 - Make sure your hands are clean before you smoke.
 - Keep 6 feet between you and the next person.
- Ask residents not to share cigarettes and lighters.
- Offer closed ashtrays for safe disposal of cigarette butts.
- Clean smoking area regularly.
- Observe those smoking and identify risks (e.g. individuals who extinguish half cigarettes and store them in their pockets).
- Ask resident to clean hands and lighters upon re-entering the building.

2) Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT)

- Consider use of the [CAMH Algorithm for Tailoring Pharmacotherapy](#).
- Ensure organization has access to NRT. [STOP Programs](#) offer free NRT.
- Offer NRT as an interim therapy during the pandemic even if there is not a plan to quit long-term.
- Establish level of dependency in order to have success with NRT. Consider using the [Fagerstrom Test for Nicotine Dependence](#).
- Consider need for more than one therapy (e.g. nicotine patch, lozenges and inhalers).
- Consider use of Nicotine spray for acute cravings (e.g. as a prn order).

3) Special Considerations with Individuals living with Dementia

Is the person having difficulty understanding the smoking limitations?

- Consider use of [DementiAbility booklets and messaging tools](#) to help explain COVID-19.
- Create cue cards or posters that reinforce key messages.
- Create tailored redirection approaches and use of [meaningful engagement](#).
- Discuss with SDM options related to smoking cessation and NRT.

Created in partnership with Marilyn White-Campbell, Geriatric Addiction Specialist BSO, Baycrest. Marilyn has generously offered to be available through email (MWhite-Campbell@baycrest.org) for further consultation.

BSO is committed to supporting individuals, family care partners and clinical teams during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

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