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FACILITATOR BACKGROUNDERS

Why Talk About Becoming Tobacco-Free in the Reproductive Years?

Knowledge Topic references are located in a separate section of the Baby Steps Help Guide e-resource.

Participant handout references are not included, but are available upon request by contacting the tru@ahs.ca.

Goal	To increase participants' knowledge of the benefits of quitting tobacco.
Objectives	<p>By the end of the learning session, participants will</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. be able to identify three ways that quitting tobacco benefits a woman's health before, during and after pregnancy 2. be able to identify three ways quitting tobacco benefits fetal and newborn health
Presentation approach	<p>As a one-to-one service provider or group facilitator, decide how you will share information and support reflection by participants. You may wish to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • print and hand out the information sheets • share the information sheets using a laptop, tablet or cell phone • visit the websites with participants, and point out where they can find additional information • engage in large or small discussion groups (if in a group setting) • have participants write down what they have learned on the handout sheets provided and/or share their learning verbally
Facilitator/ service provider backgrounders	<p>There is one facilitator background documents, three participant resources and several additional online resources for you to review to prepare for this topic:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Why Talk About the Benefits of Becoming Tobacco Free in the Reproductive Years <p>The appendices "Girls, Women, Health and Tobacco Use" and "Using a Principle-Based Approach" may also be helpful to review.</p>
Participant handout	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Benefits of becoming Tobacco-Free (handout) 2. When I Become Tobacco-Free—Benefits Chart (worksheet) 3. Jenna's Story (optional)
Additional resources and information	<p>Myhealth.alberta.ca Expecting to Quit: www.expectingtoquit.ca/resources/ Pregnets: www.pregnets.org/mothers/CommonQuestions.aspx Smokefree Women: www.women.smokefree.gov/smokefree-women-quit-guide.aspx#</p>

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Why Talk About Becoming Tobacco-Free in the Reproductive Years?

Using tobacco and tobacco-like products can affect a woman's ability to become pregnant, have a healthy pregnancy and give birth to a healthy baby. Tobacco products can also affect a man's ability to conceive a baby. It is important to discuss tobacco use with women and men in the preconception period, during pregnancy and postpartum for several reasons.

1. Pregnancy is a great time to make health changes

Planning for a pregnancy or when pregnancy is discovered is a time when expectant families tend to become more aware of and review their health and lifestyle practices. The majority of pregnant women do not use tobacco. For those who do, this can be a time for them to receive information and make changes about their tobacco use.

2. Some pregnant women do use tobacco

According to the 2014 Alberta Perinatal Health Report, 11.8% of women in Alberta smoked during their pregnancy.^[1] Among pregnant teens in Alberta under the age of 20, 38.7% used tobacco in 2014.^[2] Rates varied by zone, between 48.3% and 35.2%.^[2]

Studies and trials have shown, however, that pregnant women underreport their tobacco use.^[3] For more information on how to help clients feel more comfortable disclosing their tobacco use to you, see chapter 3.

3. There are gender and pregnancy-specific issues related to quitting

Women face unique barriers to and challenges in quitting tobacco. These include:

- Women may be concerned about the potential for weight gain.^[4, 5]
- Women are more likely to experience interpersonal violence and depression,^[6] and may use tobacco as a way of coping.
- Male partners have been shown to provide less effective support to women than women give to men.^[7]
- Women may be more susceptible to environmental cues (e.g., friends and moods) associated with the tobacco-use ritual.^[8]
- Women have more non-pharmacologic cues or motives that reinforce tobacco use (e.g., for socialization, as a break from care-giving stress).^[9, 10]
- Some adolescent women may fear having a bigger baby that is harder and more painful to deliver.^[11]
- Women experience greater rewarding effects from nicotine and more intense stress from withdrawal than men.^[8] Nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) (especially gum and patches) may not be as effective for women, due to hormonal, physiological and pharmacokinetic differences that exist and become more prevalent in pregnancy.^[12]
- Tobacco withdrawal symptoms and responses to tobacco cessation pharmacotherapy vary by menstrual cycle phase, and women experience greater withdrawal symptoms during the luteal phase.^[13]



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4. Women who quit spontaneously can benefit from reinforcement

Studies have shown that up to 40% of women who smoked before pregnancy “spontaneously stopped or quit” before their first prenatal visit (often when they realized or found out that they were pregnant). This pregnancy cessation rate is substantially higher than compared to the general population cessation rate.^[14] However, these spontaneous quitting rates may be lower among women of lower socio-economic status.^[15]

Despite high relapse rates, some studies suggest that the long-term effects of spontaneous quitting in pregnancy are significant. Others argue that this success is important to recognize to avoid pathologising cessation and eroding confidence in women’s ability to overcome their problems without professional help.^[16]

There are significant psychosocial differences between women who spontaneously quit and women who continue to smoke in late pregnancy. Women who spontaneously quit usually smoke less, have stopped smoking before, have a non-smoking partner, have more support and encouragement at home for quitting, are less seriously addicted, and have stronger beliefs about the dangers of tobacco use.^[17]

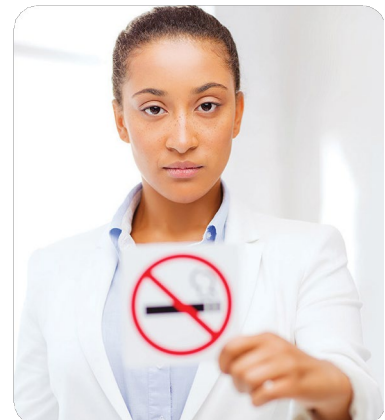
Health providers should take every opportunity to offer support and information to women based on their needs—and not the needs the provider identifies—to correct potentially harmful behaviours.

5. Becoming tobacco-free works

It is a myth that stopping under any circumstance causes more harm than continuing to use tobacco. Tobacco cessation has major and immediate benefits for everyone; no matter how long they have been using tobacco or what amount they use. Stopping tobacco at the same time as another substance also improves a person’s chances of abstinence from both. Quitting is the single most important step that anyone who uses tobacco can take to enhance the length and quality of their lives.

A person’s chances of success will be increased if they receive support related to quitting, relapse prevention strategies, increased knowledge about their personal behaviour, and other social and emotional supports.

Even if the person relapses, they will have a better chance of succeeding next time if they learned something about what worked or what stopped them from reaching their goals during their last attempt.



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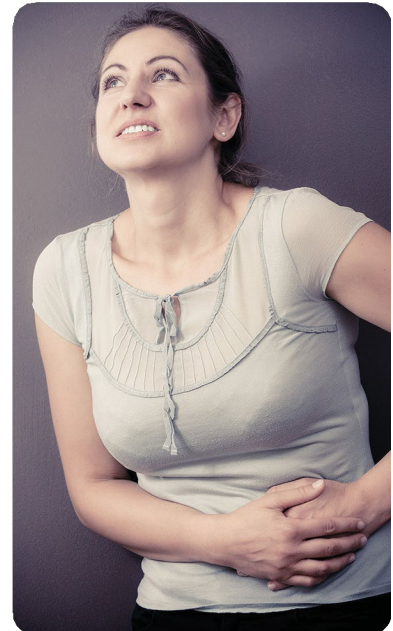
6. Tobacco use is a major cause of death and disability for Canadian women

Tobacco affects the health of women and girls differently than it affects that of men and boys. The risks of tobacco use are greater for women than they are for men, even with lower levels and frequency of use.

The health impacts of tobacco product use for women are serious. Below are some common health issues (this is not an exhaustive list):

- heart disease
- respiratory illnesses
- cancers, including lung and breast cancer
- reproductive health concerns
- pregnancy-related health concerns (e.g., ectopic pregnancy, miscarriage, preterm labour, premature rupture of membranes, placental problems)

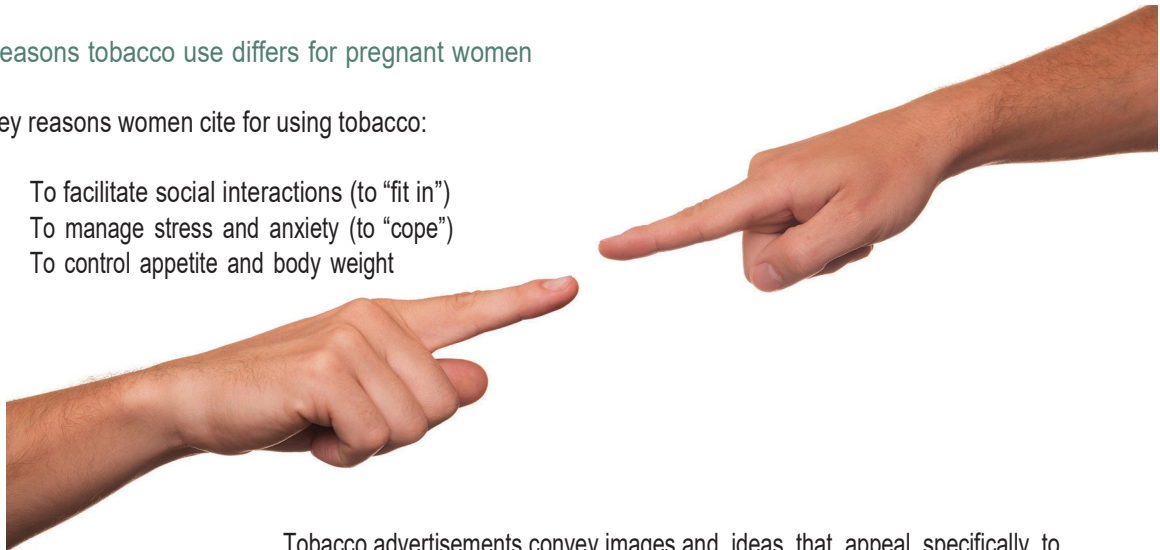
(For more information, see chapter 2, appendix 1 and topic 1 of this guide.)



7. Reasons tobacco use differs for pregnant women

Key reasons women cite for using tobacco:

- To facilitate social interactions (to “fit in”)
- To manage stress and anxiety (to “cope”)
- To control appetite and body weight



Tobacco advertisements convey images and ideas that appeal specifically to women: beauty, thinness, independence, success and control.^[18,19] Young women are targeted by the tobacco industry because they offer a new supply of customers to replace those who have quit or died from the effects of tobacco use.

Some evidence suggests that pregnant teens and young women may begin using tobacco because tobacco can lead to a lower birth weight, and they mistakenly believe that a smaller baby will be easier to deliver.^[11]

There is also considerable stigma surrounding pregnant women using tobacco. Women often switch to other forms of tobacco when they are in public to avoid the judgment they feel from others.

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PARTICIPANT HANDOUT

The Benefits of Becoming Tobacco-Free

Facts about Stopping Tobacco:

- Using tobacco and tobacco-like products negatively affects a couple's ability to conceive and support a healthy pregnancy and baby.
- Whenever possible, plan to quit tobacco before conceiving a baby. During pregnancy, quit as soon as possible. It's never too late to quit.
- Quitting improves your health right away.
- If you aren't ready to stop completely yet, start by cutting down the amount of tobacco you use. This can be a good first step towards stopping altogether.
- When you stop using tobacco, your health will improve right away.
- During the first few days after stopping use, your cravings and withdrawal symptoms may be the strongest. You can reduce the length of each craving for tobacco by distracting yourself (e.g., keep your hands, mouth, body and mind busy).
- Withdrawal symptoms are often signs that your body is healing. They are normal, temporary and will lessen within a couple of weeks.
- Some weight gain when quitting tobacco is normal. If you are worried about gaining weight when you stop, remember that any extra weight you might gain is far less harmful than continuing to use tobacco.
- Eating healthy and staying active can be helpful. Work with your doctor or registered dietician to set up a plan that is tailored for pregnancy. ^[19]

For more information, visit Alberta Health Services' [Healthy Parents Healthy Children e-resource](#).

Benefits for you when you quit:

- Improve your heart and lung health (they will be working extra hard to support your pregnancy)
- Save money that you can spend on other things
- Make your breath, clothes, hair, home and vehicles smell better
- Help make your home easier to clean, which means less work for you
- Make your food smell and taste better^[20]
- Help you feel good about what you've done for yourself
- Improve your health immediately and over time (e.g., reducing your risk of cancer)^[21]
- Reduce your chance of getting diseases caused by tobacco use
- Increase the chance your baby will come home from the hospital with you^[21]
- Increase the chance you will have enough milk to satisfy your baby ^[22]

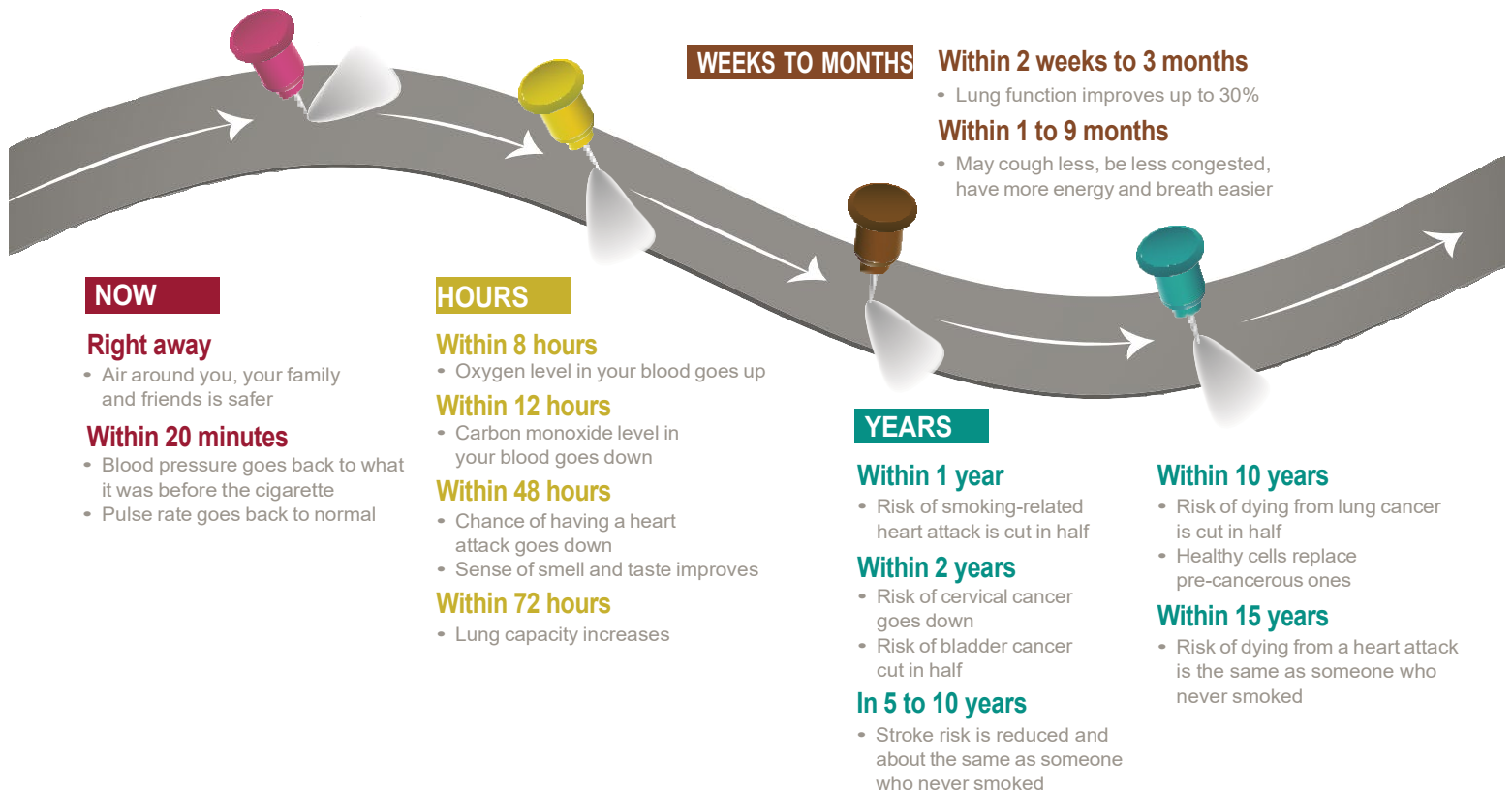
Benefits for your baby when you quit:

- Increase the amount of oxygen your baby will get
- Increase the chances that your baby's lungs will work well
- Increase the chance of your baby being born at a healthy weight^[23] (note that a smaller baby doesn't necessarily mean an easier labour and birth, and that smaller babies due to smoking are more likely to have health issues and may have to stay in hospital longer)^[24]
- Lower the risk that your baby will be born too early (often babies born too early have trouble breathing at birth)^[25]
- Lower the risk that your baby will be born with certain birth defects or have other health problems, such as sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS)^[21]

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PARTICIPANT HANDOUT The Benefits of Becoming Tobacco-Free

Quitting smoking has its benefits



For more information see the [How the Body Recovers](#) page on AlbertaQuits.ca.

If I can reach my goal to not use tobacco for (time period). _____

then I will reward myself with (your reward). _____

Place this poster somewhere visible to keep you motivated to be tobacco-free!

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PARTICIPANT HANDOUT When I Become Tobacco-Free – Benefits Chart

Topic: The benefits of becoming tobacco-free

Task: After reviewing the participant handout on the benefits of becoming tobacco-free (with a partner or group):

1. Discuss the pros and cons about quitting for you, your baby and your family.
2. List the three most important benefits for you, your child and your family in the chart below.
3. Share your most important reason(s) with your health-care provider and with the group.
4. Take your chart home to consider further benefits.

If I stop using tobacco, here are the most important ways it would benefit me, my baby and my family:

Me	My Baby	My Family
1.		
2.		
3.		

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PARTICIPANT HANDOUT Jenna's Story

It was exactly one year ago today that Jenna and Dustin started living together. Tonight they planned to celebrate their anniversary with a trip to the movies with their friends Cindy and Mike. There might even be two things to celebrate, because Jenna had just taken a home-pregnancy test and was waiting for the results.

It's positive! Jenna could hardly wait to tell Dustin. All through the movie she fidgeted and couldn't sit still. Several times Dustin asked her, "What's up?" Now the movie was over.



"Let's go for some wings!" said Mike.

"Sweet. Come on, you two. Let's go in our car," added Cindy.

Jenna thought she would rather walk than go with Cindy and Mike in the car. As much as she loves hanging out with them, they both smoke heavily. Their car stinks so bad of cigarette smoke that she's sure she'll gag on the smell. Besides, they'll both want a smoke as soon as they get into the car since they weren't able to during the movie.

"It's nice out, Let's go for coffee around the corner instead," Jenna said. "You know I love you guys, but I just don't want to be in a smoky car right now."

Dustin stopped walking and frowned at her. "Jenna, don't tell me you're trying to quit again. You know what happened last time you tried—we all had to put up with you being a real bag. I'm not going through that again," he exclaimed.

Cindy nodded her head in agreement. "Yeah, you can be a real downer when you don't get your cigarettes."

All of a sudden Jenna's news lost some of its excitement. Dustin was right. She had been miserable to live with the last time she tried to quit. But this was different. Now she was pregnant. If smoking wasn't good for you before you were pregnant, she was sure it wouldn't be good for you when you were. And what about Dustin? He smoked, too. Would his smoking affect the baby? And Cindy—the first thing she did when she came over for coffee was have a cigarette to go with it.

What if she couldn't quit? It had been so hard the last time. She'd only managed to stay off tobacco for a few months before she'd started stressing out about everything and had started smoking again. Dustin had not stopped then and it was hard to stay quit when he was still smoking around her. But then again, she had quit. That was good, wasn't it? Knowing that she could do it. She'd even managed to save up a little money for concert tickets. And she'd felt good. It definitely had been easier to ride her bike to work. Her mom had quit smoking when she was expecting Jenna. She'd stayed quit, too. Now no one could smoke in her mom's house.

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PARTICIPANT HANDOUT Jenna's Story

And now she was pregnant. How she'd dreamed of this moment. To know that she and Dustin had created this baby and together would see their child grow. Things would be different for their child. They would protect her—or maybe him—from all that was wrong in this world.

Jenna smiled softly to herself. "Protect my baby," she thought. "Where do I begin? There's so much out there to protect her from. What can I do?"

"Okay, Jenna, all night you've been smiling and fidgeting. What's up?" Dustin asked.

"Well," Jenna began, "I've decided to quit smoking for good this time. I've done it before and I can do it again." She rushed on excitedly. "And I want you to think about quitting, too, Dustin. Especially now that we're going to have a baby."

"That's it!" exclaimed Dustin. "You're smiling because you're going to quit smoking?" Then the words finally hit him.

"A baby...?"