



Reducing exposure to tobacco smoke

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When people smoke tobacco (cigarettes) around family and friends, everyone else smokes too. Reducing the amount of tobacco smoke that children are exposed to (both before and after birth) can reduce children's risk of catching colds, developing asthma and chest infections, and middle ear infections and hearing loss. Reducing an infant's exposure to tobacco smoke can also reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). Not smoking around children is also important because it may also help children not take up smoking themselves as adults.

Quitting smoking or reducing the number of cigarettes smoked can have immediate health benefits, enhance the health of the person who has quit and will also mean that they will have extra money available.

Smoking cigarettes is highly addictive and quitting can be stressful and difficult, so it is important that people wanting to quit are provided with appropriate supports to help them with quitting. Smoking cessation is a very personal and sensitive issue, and it is usually not appropriate for early childhood education staff to raise this issue with parents directly. This is more appropriately done by health workers who can provide direct support to parents or carers wishing to quit. However, having good health promotion messages and resources available in early childhood education settings for families to access is still useful.

Health messages

- > Quitting smoking at any age will improve your health.
- > Many people successfully quit smoking, with and without assistance. But, there is no 'best way' to quit smoking.
- > Local Health Services and GPs can provide advice and support to help quit smoking.
- > By not smoking inside your home you can reduce the harm that second-hand smoke can cause your family.
- > Whether you are a smoker or not, you may wish to develop rules in your home about cigarette smoking to help reduce exposure of children to tobacco smoke.

Examples of practical actions

- > Look for appropriate opportunities to generate conversation about cigarette smoking avoidance/cessation with Aboriginal families and communities.
- > Become familiar with the supports available for people trying to quit or reduce smoking (e.g. Quitline).
- > For health staff, partner with Aboriginal Health Workers and Services and know about the options and availability of Nicotine Replacement Therapies (NRT).
- > Display and distribute health promotion materials in early childhood settings.



For more information

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