



# TREATING TOBACCO USE AND DEPENDENCE: Five Major Steps to Intervention (The 5A's)

Successful intervention begins with identifying users and appropriate interventions based upon the patient's willingness to quit. The five major steps to intervention are the "5 A's": Ask, Advise, Assess, Assist, and Arrange.

## ASK

Identify and document tobacco use status for every patient at every visit.

(You may wish to develop your own vital signs sticker, based on the sample below).

## ADVISE

In a clear, strong, and personalized manner, urge every tobacco user to quit.

## ASSESS

Is the tobacco user willing to make a quit attempt at this time?

## ASSIST

For the patient willing to make a quit attempt, use counseling and pharmacotherapy to help him or her quit.

## ARRANGE

Schedule followup contact, in person or by telephone, preferably within the first week after the quit date.

*Tobacco is the single greatest preventable cause of disease and premature death in America today.*

*"Starting today, every doctor, nurse, health plan, purchaser, and medical school in America should make treating tobacco dependence a top priority."*

David Satcher, MD, Ph.D.  
Former U.S. Surgeon General  
Director, National Center for Primary Care, Morehouse School of Medicine

## VITAL SIGNS

Blood Pressure: \_\_\_\_\_  
Pulse: \_\_\_\_\_ Weight: \_\_\_\_\_  
Temperature: \_\_\_\_\_  
Respiratory Rate: \_\_\_\_\_  
Tobacco Use (circle one): Current Former Never

*\*Alternatives to expanding the vital signs are to place tobacco-use status stickers on all patient charts or to indicate tobacco use status using electronic medical records or computer reminder systems.*

Quick reference guides  
for each of the 5A's:  
[https://bit.ly/AHRQ\\_5As](https://bit.ly/AHRQ_5As)

