

# Opportunities in dental hygiene

- Patients you normally contact
- Regular support
- Referring patients to a quitline
- Collaborating with other healthcare providers

End goal: **Patient success**

## Smoking and your patients

- Increased plaque/tartar build up
- Discolors teeth (yellowing)
- Increased risk of:
  - Gum disease (#1 cause of periodontal disease)
  - Tooth loss
  - Loss of bone in the jaw
  - Oral cancers
- Delayed healing after dental procedures

## As an oral health professional, you can...

- Ask
  - Assess tobacco use for every patient– medical histories, asking at their visit
- Assess
  - Assess patients' willingness and motivation to quit
  - Discuss the benefits of quitting and motivate patients to quit
- Refer
  - QuitWorks
  - Follow up as part of the reminder call routine for patients' regular visits

## With a little more time, you can...

- Provide personalized oral health information as it relates to tobacco use
  - My best advice is to quit, and it will help with [your recent trouble with gum disease, etc.]
- Based on patient information, give ideas for quit strategies and help patient come up with his/her own
- Help your patients stay healthier between visits

# Starting the conversation

- Did they just get out of the hospital?
  - Sometimes big health events can prompt patients to be ready for changes like quitting smoking
- Chewable tobacco
  - Chewing tobacco, but also things that look like mints or breath-freshening strips
- New meds
  - When you ask about new meds, also ask if they discussed smoking with their doctor because smoking causes some medications to act differently.

## Starting the conversation

- Teens: avoid smoking to keep teeth healthy as they grow
  - 88% of adult smokers started before 18\*
  - 99% of first use happens before 26\*
  - Possibly children if appropriate

## In your office

- Ex: Waiting room posters

Did you know?

Smoking makes it hard to keep your  
mouth healthy.

Let us know you smoke. Get free help to quit.