Screening for tobacco use is recommended for all adult (including pregnant women) and adolescent patients at the time of initial, annual and interim visits to the primary care provider. Provide at least a brief intervention to every tobacco user at each health care visit. In addition, screen heavy tobacco users for other addictions, as heavy tobacco use is often a surrogate marker of alcohol and other substance dependence.

Providers have high credibility with tobacco users. Tobacco users cite a provider’s advice to quit as an important motivator for attempting to stop smoking.

The 5 A’s (the five major components of a brief intervention)
1. **Ask** every patient if he/she uses tobacco and document tobacco use status (current, former, or never) in patient’s record. Ask Adolescent smoker, at what age did you begin smoking?
2. **Assess** their tobacco use by asking: Do you now smoke cigarettes every day, some days, or not at all? Assess the willingness of all tobacco users to make a quit attempt at this time
3. **Advise** all tobacco users to quit and advise children and teenagers to NOT start smoking
4. **Assist** willing tobacco user in making quit attempt by offering medication and/or providing a referral for counseling or additional treatment
5. **Arrange** for follow-up contacts to prevent relapse

Current tobacco users willing to make a quit attempt at this time
1. Aid the patient in quitting (provide counseling and medication)
2. Help the patient with a quit plan. Set a quit date, anticipate challenges, and advise patient to remove tobacco from their home environment
3. Recommend the use of approved medications, except if contraindicated
4. Provide counseling and practical problem solving/skill training
5. Provide a supportive clinical environment of encouragement, care and concern and intra- treatment social support
6. Provide information or educational pamphlets, as well as information on quit hotlines (national quit-line network [1-800-QUIT-NOW] or other local quit-line) and any other local support resources

Current tobacco users unwilling to make a quit attempt at this time
1. Patients unwilling to make a quit attempt during a visit may lack information about the harmful effects of tobacco use and the benefits of quitting, may lack the required financial resources, may have fears or concerns about quitting or may be demoralized because of previous relapse. These patients may respond to brief motivational interventions
2. Explore the importance of tobacco use cessation using open-ended questions
3. Highlight the discrepancy between the patient’s present behavior and expressed values
4. Back off and use reflection when the patient expresses resistance
5. Offer options for achievable small steps toward change or help the patient identify and build on past successes
6. Being specific, encourage the patient to indicate why quitting is personally relevant
7. Ask the patient to identify potential negative consequences of tobacco use
8. Ask the patient to identify potential benefits of tobacco use cessation
9. Ask the patient to identify barriers to quitting tobacco use

If a patient is unwilling to make a quit attempt, the practitioner should provide a motivational intervention and arrange to address tobacco dependence at the next visit. Repeat these interventions every time an unmotivated patients visits. Tobacco users who have failed in previous quit attempts should be told that most people make repeated quit attempts before they are successful.

**Former tobacco users who have recently quit**
1. Congratulate and strongly encourage the former tobacco user on any success and to remain abstinent
2. When encountering a recent quitter, use open-ended questions relevant to potential health benefits the patient may derive from cessation and address any problems encountered or anticipated threats to remain tobacco-free
3. Assess the effectiveness and side effects of medication (if the patient is still taking medication)

**Patients who have never used tobacco**
1. Congratulate these patients on their status and encourage them to maintain their tobacco-free lifestyle

**References:**
NCQA Hedis 2009 Specifications for Survey Measures
Quit Line Iowa @ www.quitlineiowa.org