

## The role of ASHA in addressing tobacco and alcohol as risk factors

So far your work has largely dealt with female members of the community since you have worked mostly on women and children's issues. However, as you begin to work on NCDs, communicating with men on topics such as the use of tobacco and alcohol is important. This may at first seem difficult. This is perhaps more in areas where there are barriers for open discussions between women and men. It is important for you to more actively seek the participation of members of the Village Health Sanitation and Nutrition Committee or members of the Mahila Arogya Samiti or other community groups, such as - youth groups, SHG groups, etc. Your key tasks are to:

1. Increase community awareness about the harmful effects of tobacco and alcohol to their health and the health of those around them.
2. Improve understanding of the money spent on tobacco and alcohol use and the likely costs of treatment needed if they were to fall ill.
3. Ensure that children and adolescents - both boys and girls are also aware regarding the effects of tobacco and alcohol use. The platform of adolescent meeting and Rashtriya Kishor Swasthya Karyakram (RKSK) can be used to disseminate these messages.
4. Work with individuals who use tobacco and alcohol and motivate them to quit these habits by explaining the harmful consequences of tobacco and alcohol use. Request the Male Multipurpose worker/ASHA Facilitator or male volunteers in your community to support you.
5. Work with the VHSNC to undertake community activities to see how many young people use tobacco and alcohol and share this information in community. With the VHSNC you can organise community action against the availability of tobacco and alcohol - like set-up of shops, illegal supply and production of tobacco and alcohol in the community. This demands building solidarity and support for this cause from various women's groups, other ASHAs, panchayat/ULB members, recognised healthcare providers etc.
6. Identify tobacco cessation centres and de-addiction centres that are in your area and provide information to people about how to access these centres.
7. Mobilise on a priority basis, those who consume tobacco and alcohol to attend screening for Non-Communicable Diseases. Support those with hypertension and diabetes and motivate them to give up these habits.

