

## Tobacco Dependence: Nicotine Dependent Patient (Acute Mental Health)

### Site Applicability

VGH and UBCH - Acute Mental Health Units

### Practice Level

MD, OT, PW, RN, RPN, RPsych, SW

### Goal

- Patients admitted to VGH and UBCH acute mental health units are screened for their nicotine use and informed of the VCH Smoke Free Premises policy.
- Patients who smoke are supported during abstinence; support includes management of nicotine withdrawal, environmental and emotional support.
- Patients are encouraged and enabled to respect the VCH Smoke Free Premises policy.

### Policy Statements

Vancouver Coastal Health has a Smoke Free Premises policy effective May 31, 2008 for VGH and UBCH. No patients, staff and visitors are permitted to smoke in the hospital or on hospital grounds.

VGH and UBCH Acute Mental Health support the VCH Smoke Free Premises Policy.

### Need to Know

Access to Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT) is key to helping patients abstain from smoking. Effective NRT includes giving repeated opportunities to receive NRT, in appropriate delivery routes, in sufficient dosages and for adequate durations.

Vancouver Acute Clinical Practice Document [Nicotine Dependent Patient-Care and Management of \[BD-00-07-40064\]](#)

## Practice Guideline

### Screening Patients

- On admission all patients are screened for tobacco use by asking, "Have you used any tobacco products in the last 6 months?" (RN/RPN/MD)
- On admission and again on transfer, determine tobacco-using patient's level of nicotine dependence by using the Brief Fagerstrom Test on the "[Nicotine Replacement Therapy Orders Form](#)" (RN/RPN/MD)
- Write NRT orders, based on the Brief Fagerstrom Test ([Nicotine Replacement Therapy Orders Form](#)) (MD)

### Informing patients, families and visitors

- Inform patients and families on admission and transfer that VCH has a Smoke Free Premises Policy.
- On admission, request that family members take home patients tobacco products and matches/lighters. Review the unit's patient/family information booklet section on smoking.
- If they are not taken home, inform patient that his/her tobacco and matches/lighters are stored for safekeeping.
- Inform them that tobacco products and matches/lighters are only returned to the patient when the patient is discharged or when they are able to take them home and at no other time.
- Inform patients that they may not bring tobacco products and lighters back to the hospital.
- Discuss VCH Smoke Free Premises Policy in patient group meetings.

### Supporting patients during abstinence

- Provide NRT as ordered.
- Assess for signs and symptoms of nicotine withdrawal during abstinence. ([Nicotine Dependent Patient-Care and Management of \[BD-00-07-40064\]](#)). Distinguish symptoms of withdrawal from symptoms of psychiatric illness. (RN/RPN/MD)
- Continue to monitor patient for withdrawal signs and symptoms and provide PRN NRT, as ordered.
- Educate patient on the usage of the different types of NRT. Assess for side effects of NRT. (RN/RPN/MD/OT)
- Discuss interaction of nicotine and psychotropic medications. (MD)
- Provide alternative activities to smoking-diversionary activities, changing routines, attending support groups, learning other strategies to cope with emotions. Provide opportunity to learn new activities to manage stress or other negative emotions. Provide healthier, pleasant activities for inpatients. (RN/RPN/OT/SW/RPsych)

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- Identify patient behavioral triggers or cravings. Provide education on how to avoiding cravings and triggers. Enforce no smoking at doorways, advise visitors not to bring smoking materials. Provide crave kit with sugarless gum, lollipop, squeeze ball, etc. *(RN/RPN/OT/SW/RPsych)*

## Encouraging patients to respect the VCH Smoke Free Premises Policy

With tobacco-using patients:

- Discuss in ward meeting: VCH Smoke Free Premises Policy, the risks of surreptitious smoking to other patients e.g. fire risk, second hand smoke. *(RN/RPN)*

With visitors:

- Review the patient/family information booklet section on smoking. *(All staff)*
- Inform visitors of VCH Smoke Free Premises Policy. *(All staff)*
- Remind visitors they may not bring tobacco or matches/lighters to the unit and may not give them to patients. *(All staff)*

With a patient who has difficulty respecting the policy:

- Monitor violations of VCH Smoke Free Premises Policy.
- Remind patient of VCH Smoke Free Premises Policy whenever a violation occurs. Remind patients that they may not have access to tobacco or matches/lighters. *(All Staff)*
- Provide motivational interviewing for managing behaviours such as smoking in bathrooms, bedroom or at doorway stairwell.
- Conduct frequent checks of patient rooms and bathrooms when patient is known to smoke surreptitiously. *(RN/RPN/PW)*
- Conduct searches of tobacco and matches/lighters as necessary. *(RN/RPN/PW)*
- In Ward Rounds, discuss care planning for patient who frequently breaks the policy. Discuss consistent enforcement. *(All staff)*

## Related Documents

- Physician Order Form – [Nicotine Replacement Therapy Orders Form](#)
- [Nicotine Dependent Patient-Care and Management of \[BD-00-07-40064\]](#)
- [VCH Smoke-Free Premises Policy \[D-00-11-30043\]](#)
- [Nicotine Patch \(Habitrol, Nicoderm\) patient information sheet](#)
- [Nicotine Gum \(Nicorette Gum\) patient information sheet](#)
- [Nicotine Inhaler \(Nicorette Inhaler\) patient information sheet](#)

## References

Going 100% smoke-free in a secure setting: One hospital's successful experience. (2004). Healthcare Quarterly 7:9, 42-48

Implementing smoke free policies in psychiatric and addiction facilities. (2006) Centre for Addiction and Mental Health. Toronto: Ontario

Lawn, S. & Pols, R. (2005) Smoking bans in psychiatric inpatient settings? A review of the research.

Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry 39:866-885. Smoke-Free Premises Policy

Implementation Manual (2008), Tobacco Reduction Strategy. Vancouver Coastal Health Authority

Tobacco reduction in the context of mental illness and addictions. (2006). Provincial Health Services Authority

## Revised By

**PROGRAM/UNIT:** Acute Mental Health

**Task Group / Individual Names:** Acute Mental Health Clinical Practice Documents Committee

### **Members:**

Staff Nurse, VGH Psychiatry – West 1

Psychiatrist, VGH Psychiatry - West 1

Medical Manager, Psychiatry - Brief Intervention Unit

Quality Improvement Coordinator & Planner, Psychiatry

Patient Services Manager, Psychiatry – VGH Inpatients

Clinical Educator, Psychiatry - VGH

## Endorsed By

Patient Services Manager, Psychiatry – UBCH Inpatients

Patient Services Manager, Psychiatry – VGH Inpatients

Director, Acute Mental Health

Medical Director, Acute Mental Health

## Approved for Posting

Acting Director Professional Practice Nursing, Vancouver – Acute Services

Director Professional Practice, Regional and Vancouver-Acute Services Allied Health

Director Professional Practice Nursing and Allied Health, Vancouver - Community

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## Date of Revision

Original publication date: March/2011

Review /revision date(s):

## Alternate Search Terms

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