

People with Disabilities and Smoking Cessation

People with disabilities have a higher rate of smoking than people without disabilities. According to the 2010 Iowa BRFSS results, 21% of respondents who reported some type of disability also reported that they regularly smoke as opposed to 15% without a disability. Reasons why this occurs is unknown, some suggest that isolation, depression and use as a coping mechanism to be the cause. Some surveys reveal that people with disability disclose that smoking provides a means for relaxation. Others do not have the desire to quit, or do not have the ability due to the addiction to nicotine.

What we do know is people with disabilities can have health concerns that are further complicated by smoking and/or using tobacco products.

Tobacco use may:

- Decrease the effectiveness of some medications
- Slows down the healing process after surgery
- Slows down the healing process from wounds
- Decrease lung capacity, limiting physical activity
- Impact circulatory system - slow it down
- Raise blood pressure and heart rate

There also may be barriers that limit participation of smoking cessation programs by people with disabilities that could include:

- Unawareness of where to find smoking cessation programs
- Accessible, affordable transportation
- Cost of program
- Privacy issues, lack of trust in providers
- Lack of program materials in alternate formats, i.e. for low to no vision, cognitive disabilities
- Inaccessible facilities
- Primary care physicians may be more focused on disability, don't offer preventive care

How to overcome barriers:

- Establish partnerships with disability organizations and support networks to promote tobacco cessation programs
- Maintain current information on the websites of disability organizations
- Offer programs in local communities, especially in rural areas
- Ensure accessibility - program materials and facilities

For more information visit IDPH website Tobacco Use Prevention and Control at <http://www.idph.state.ia.us/TUPAC/> or Quitline Iowa, a free telephone counseling option at 1-800-QuitNow, 1-800-784-8669.

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