

Call to Action: Improve Future Pregnancy Outcomes by Screening for Tobacco Use Now

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Pre-pregnancy health has implications for pregnancy outcomes and the best time to stop tobacco use is long before a woman becomes pregnant. Long term tobacco use results in cardiovascular changes including atherosclerosis, coronary artery disease, thrombosis, and chronic inflammation. These effects predispose women to poor outcomes with future pregnancies. It is well known that any tobacco use during pregnancy increases the risk of preterm birth, stillbirth, neonatal mortality, miscarriage, fetal growth restriction, and infant morbidity.^{1,2,3} This is particularly an issue in Nebraska as, in 2019, a higher percentage of Nebraska women reported smoking in the three months before pregnancy than women in other states.⁴

Nebraska's prematurity rate has consistently been higher than the national average since 2018.⁵ In addition to the emotional toll of prematurity on families, there is also an economic toll. The cost of hospital care for preterm newborns ranges from \$4,500 to over \$100,000 depending on gestational age.⁶ In 2020, 1 in 10 babies were born preterm in Nebraska and the United States. The March of Dimes Peristats shows Nebraska's prematurity rate has been higher than the national average for three years, when looking at the 2018-2020 average prematurity rate of 10.5% of live births in Nebraska compared to the national average at 10.1% of live births.^{5,7}

Tobacco quitlines are a proven effective practice for assisting with tobacco cessation.

As a healthcare provider, patients trust your recommendations. You can play an important role in helping your patients quit

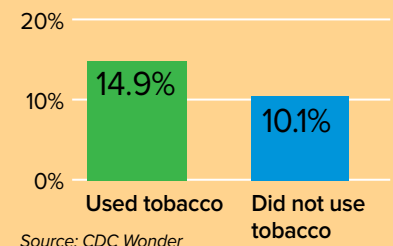
all forms of tobacco, including cigarettes, vape, and chew, by connecting them with the tools they need. The Nebraska Perinatal Quality Improvement Collaborative (NPQIC) and Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services supports the Nebraska Tobacco Quitline as an evidence-based strategy to reduce tobacco use.

Regardless of insurance coverage, you can refer your patients to the Nebraska Tobacco Quitline to access free coaching support to quit tobacco, nicotine replacement therapy (NRT), and planning and educational materials to help participants map out their road to quitting tobacco. Recent changes have made referrals to the Quitline easier than ever. Referrals may be faxed or submitted online. Learn more about the Nebraska Tobacco Quitline at www.QuitNow.ne.gov/

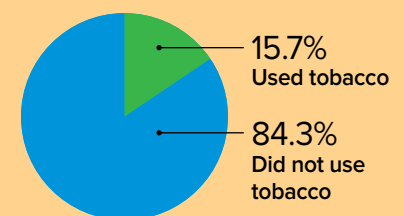
providers and access Quitline FAQs at <https://ne.quitlogix.org/en-US/Just-Looking/Health-Professional/Provider-FAQs>. Free continuing education modules are also available for providers at www.QuitNow.ne.gov/providers.

Any use of tobacco during pregnancy increases negative birth outcomes, so all women of childbearing age, including teenagers, should be screened, and counseled about the harmful risks of tobacco use before and during pregnancy. Although cigarettes are the preferred tobacco source for adults, too many teenagers are becoming addicted to tobacco through vaping. Tobacco screening and counseling by every healthcare provider for all women of childbearing age will help to prevent poor pregnancy outcomes, including prematurity, in the future.

Preterm Birth by Tobacco Use During Pregnancy, Nebraska Vital Statistics 2020



Tobacco Use in the 3 Months Before Pregnancy, Nebraska PRAMS 2020



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