



Swap-to-Stop: a memory jogger

Introduction

Swap-to-Stop is a government scheme that aims to encourage **one million people in England to switch from smoking to vaping by providing free vape starter kits.**

Whilst not risk-free, **vaping poses only a small fraction of the risks of smoking.** This is because there is no combustion with vapes and the vapour produced does not contain the products in cigarette smoke that cause lung disease, heart disease and cancer. Anyone who smokes and who **switches to vaping is making a change that results in immediate health benefits.**

The **Swap-to-Stop scheme can** be delivered in a variety of settings, meaning it **is likely to reach some of those who would not usually engage with stop smoking support.** The figure below outlines how you can ask about a person's smoking (**ASK**), talk to them about the Swap-to-Stop scheme (**ADVISE**) and respond appropriately (**ACT**).

Very Brief Advice on Smoking (VBA+): Swap-to-Stop

ASK

about smoking status

"Do you smoke?"

ADVISE

on the most effective way of quitting and Swap-to-Stop

"Did you know that the best way of stopping smoking is with a combination of a stop smoking aid and specialist support? We're running a scheme called Swap-to-Stop to help people switch from smoking to vaping and we'll be able to provide you with a free vape starter pack. Is this something you might be interested in?"

ACT

on the client's response

INTERESTED

ARRANGE FOR FREE VAPE TO BE SUPPLIED

"That's great news, let me explain the scheme in a bit more detail and give you some information on where you can get some extra support to help you stop smoking. Whilst support from a stop smoking practitioner will improve your chances of quitting, it isn't essential to take part in the scheme."

Refer to/provide details for:

Local Stop Smoking Service **OR** in-house stop smoking support
OR any other support options available locally.

UNCERTAIN

"Are you sure you don't want to simply give it a try? All you would have to do is take home a free vape and let us know how you get on with it."

Deliver VBA again at future visits.

NOT INTERESTED

"That's OK, if you do change your mind just come back and we'll be happy to give you a vape."

Deliver VBA again at future visits.

Follow up

It is likely that clients in the Swap-to-Stop scheme will come back to see you, especially if they are doing well. This may be as part of their regular scheduled appointments or as part of the Swap-to-Stop programme.

When seeing clients taking part in the scheme, it is important to **encourage them to use their vape** and emphasise what vapes can offer to someone who is trying to stop smoking.

If a client has made a **complete swap** from smoking to vaping, you could say:

"That's fantastic to hear, I'm really pleased for you! Be sure to come back and let me know how you're getting on with vaping in a few weeks' time. Don't forget to keep using it for as long as you feel you need to to stop you going back to smoking."

If a client has made a **partial swap** (replaced some of their smoking with vaping) you could say:

"This is something that can happen – the feeling of vaping isn't quite the same as that of smoking. If this is putting you off, try experimenting with the technique you use. People who vape often describe 'sipping' on the device as opposed to deeply inhaling like they did when they smoked."

I'd encourage you to keep using your vape as much as you can. Many people who vape use it more often than they smoked and so it could be that you aren't using it enough to get the levels of nicotine your body is used to. If this is the case, try using it more and you could also try using a higher strength of e-liquid."

If the client is **concerned about the safety of vaping**, you could add:

"Whilst not risk-free, vaping poses a small fraction of the risks of smoking and so anyone who switches from smoking to vaping is instantly improving their health."

If a client has **neither swapped to vaping nor stopped smoking**, you could say:

"That's OK, stopping smoking isn't easy. If you're feeling the pressure, why not just try using the vape at least once a day to start with?"

Questions that you might be asked by your clients

Aren't vapes worse than cigarettes?

No. Unlike cigarettes, **there is no combustion (burning) involved in vaping** and therefore no smoke or other harmful products of combustion, such as tar and carbon monoxide. Whilst side effects of long-term vaping may yet emerge, these risks are likely to be significantly lower than the risks of smoking and low in absolute terms.

Am I just swapping one addiction for another?

No. Nicotine is what causes dependence and is the same substance whether it is smoked, vaped, or delivered by things like the nicotine gum or patch. When it comes to providing the body with the levels of nicotine it is used to, vaping is a much safer alternative to tobacco.

Can I use a nicotine patch as well as vaping?

Yes. Combining two forms of nicotine increases success with quitting. The patch provides a steady dose of nicotine and a vape can be used to top up nicotine levels to manage withdrawal symptoms and urges to smoke.

I'm using the vape but sometimes smoking as well, is that OK?

I'd advise you to **switch to vaping completely** as there is no safe level of tobacco use. Try using your vape every day at times you would otherwise smoke, and use your vape more often than you smoked to obtain the levels of nicotine your body is used to.

What if I don't manage to quit smoking?

Try vaping by replacing some of your cigarettes with a vape to get used to it. You can also try different flavours of e-liquid and, once you find one that you like, use it to replace smoking as much as possible.

How long should I vape for?

There is no rush to stop vaping and the longer you vape, the less likely you are to go back to smoking. Continue using a vape for several weeks after you have stopped smoking before even thinking about stopping, and then stop **only if you are confident that you can remain smokefree.**

Resources

Online training

Swap-to-Stop online module

https://elearning.ncsct.co.uk/swap_to_stop-launch

Vaping: a guide for healthcare professionals

<https://elearning.ncsct.co.uk/vaping-launch>

Briefings and guidance

Swap-to-Stop resources

www.ncsct.co.uk/publications/swap-to-stop

Vaping: a guide for health and social care professionals

www.ncsct.co.uk/publications/vaping_briefing

Supporting clients who want to stop vaping

www.ncsct.co.uk/publications/support_stop_vaping