



PEI SMOKING CESSATION PROGRAM: AGE OF CONSENT TO TREATMENT GUIDANCE

The *PEI Smoking Cessation Program* covers 100% of the cost of smoking cessation products for eligible PEI residents who wish to stop smoking, vaping or using other tobacco products.

Background: Assessing NRT Prescriptions for Youth

Guidance on prescribing Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT) for youth under 18 who are moderately or severely addicted to nicotine and motivated to quit should focus on ensuring that the benefits outweigh the risks. In cases where NRT is deemed appropriate, the decision rests with the prescribing healthcare provider, who should carefully consider the individual's specific circumstances, including the severity of addiction and readiness to quit.

Guidance on Prescribing Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT) for Youth Under 18

For youth under 18 who are moderately or severely addicted to nicotine and motivated to quit, prescribing NRT may be considered when the benefits outweigh the risks. Moderate to severe nicotine addiction refers to a high level of dependence on nicotine, characterized by intense cravings, increased tolerance, and withdrawal symptoms. Individuals at this level often struggle to reduce or quit smoking on their own and may find it difficult to do so without the support of an NRT. Providers should review the youth's tobacco use history and assess their level of nicotine dependence during the Smoking Cessation Consultation.

While prescribing NRT to youth under 18 is an individualized decision, it is essential to consider the patient's level of nicotine dependence, motivation to quit, and ability to provide informed consent.

Key Considerations:

1. **Clinical Judgment:** The responsibility for prescribing NRT lies with the healthcare provider, who must use clinical judgment to assess the individual's specific situation. This includes evaluating the level of nicotine dependence, the motivation to quit, and any potential health risks or contraindications associated with NRT.
2. **Informed Consent:** It is assumed that individuals under 18 are capable of providing informed consent unless proven otherwise. Healthcare providers should ensure that the youth understands the potential benefits, risks, and alternatives to NRT.
3. **Provider Responsibility:** The provider is responsible for ongoing monitoring and support to ensure the therapy is effective and well-tolerated.

For information regarding the Smoking Cessation Program, please contact the Provincial Tobacco Control Coordinator at the Chief Public Health Office.

Chief Public Health Office Contact Information:

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