



Very Brief Advice on Smoking (VBA+)

30 seconds to save a life

Very Brief Advice on Smoking, known as VBA, is a life-saving intervention delivered by health and social care practitioners that triggers quit attempts. VBA is recommended by NICE as evidence-based and cost-effective.¹⁻⁶

VBA is a 30-second intervention that can be delivered by all healthcare professionals in almost every consultation with patients who smoke.

VBA involves asking patients about their current smoking, advising them on the best methods of stopping smoking available to them and helping them access evidence-based stop smoking support.

The original VBA model focused on driving smokers to local Stop Smoking Services. VBA+ is an update to the original model and aims to reflect the fact that access to stop smoking support delivery can vary. The principles and merits of VBA remain the same and VBA can be adapted to reflect support that is locally available.

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Very Brief Advice on Smoking

ASK

and record smoking status

"Do you smoke?"

ADVISE

on the most effective way of quitting

"Did you know that the best way of stopping smoking is with a combination of specialist support and medication or e-cigarettes?"

"I can refer you to our friendly local stop smoking service that many of my patients have found useful."

or *"You can receive support right here in our clinic/hospital/local pharmacy."*
or add any other support options available locally.

ACT

on patient's response

INTERESTED

Build confidence.
Give information. Prescribe.

Refer to: local Stop Smoking Service

OR in-house stop smoking support

OR any other support options
locally available.

**Patients are three times more likely
to quit with support and medication.**

FOLLOW-UP

Make a note of the referral and
ask about smoking status next
time you see the patient.

NOT INTERESTED

*"It's your choice of course.
Help will always be available.
You can always return to see me,
contact the smokefree helpline or
your GP if you change your mind."*

**Ensure patient understands
where to find support.**

REASSESS

Repeat VBA at future visits
and at least once a year.

Support to stop smoking: evidence of effectiveness

The most effective method to quit smoking is with a combination of behavioural support and stop smoking medication or an e-cigarette (vape).⁷⁻¹³

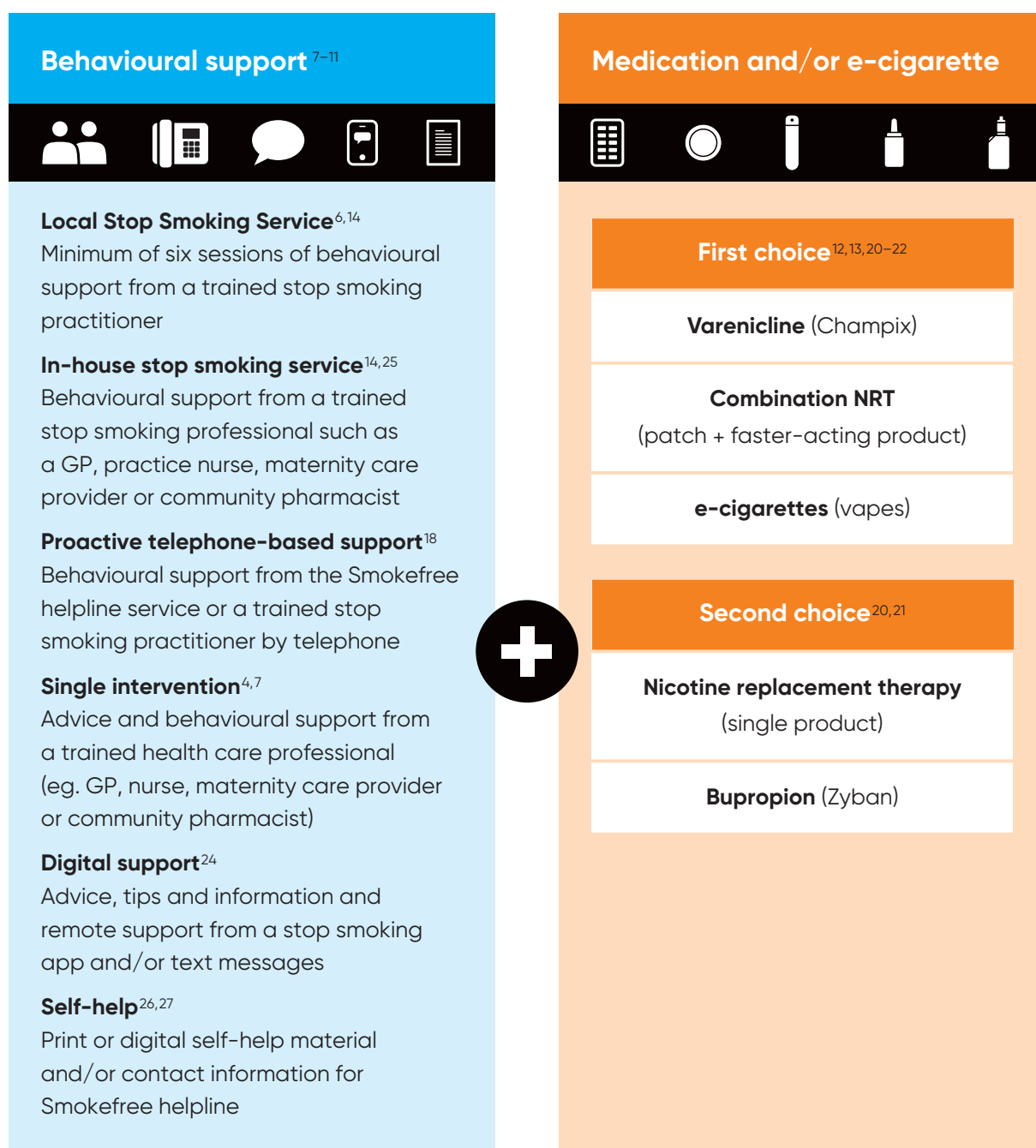
Specifically, we know:

- **Individuals who smoke have higher quit rates when they receive support from a trained stop smoking specialist** (someone who's main role is to support people with quitting).^{9,14,15}
- While face-to-face counselling, either individual or group, is considered the 'gold standard', **patients who receive support via telephone also do well.** There is less evidence on video-based support, but it is reasonable to assume that video would be comparable to telephone-based models.^{7,9,11,16-19}
- Smokers can benefit from a single stop smoking support intervention, but **success with quitting increases with multiple sessions** (usually at least six weekly appointments).^{4,7,9,11,16}
- **The most effective stop smoking medications are varenicline** (Champix) **and combination nicotine replacement therapy** (NRT; nicotine patch + faster-acting NRT product).²⁰⁻²²
- There is new evidence that **e-cigarettes (vaping) can be an effective aid** for increasing smokers' chances of quitting.^{12,13}
- Having access to stop smoking support (medications plus behavioural support) free of charge can **increase the likelihood that a smoker will use these medications properly and for the recommended duration.**²³
- **There is some evidence that text messages and stop smoking apps can add value to quit attempts** but more research is needed. Digital support is recommended as a complement to support from a trained practitioner (stop smoking specialist, health care provider) and/or for persons who would not otherwise access stop smoking support.^{11,24}

Tailoring VBA to match available local support

Not every smoker has access to the same stop smoking support. To inform the **ACT** component of Very Brief Advice on Smoking it will be important to identify which stop smoking support is available in your locality so that you can refer smokers interested in quitting to the best available support.

We know that both behavioural support and stop smoking medications or e-cigarettes are effective in supporting quitting when delivered on their own. **Combining both leads to the best outcomes.** The figure below outlines the types of behavioural support and medications that may be available locally in a suggested order of effectiveness.



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