It’s Not Too Late to Quit

Experts call for smoking cessation after cancer diagnosis

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It’s well known that smoking cessation can prevent several types of cancer, but people who are already diagnosed can benefit too.

The International Association for the Study of Lung Cancer calls on clinicians to screen cancer patients for tobacco use and counsel smokers about the benefits of quitting. Those who still smoke should receive evidence-based cessation assistance integrated into their multidisciplinary cancer care—and insurers should cover it.

Fortunately, smoking cessation efforts can have a high success rate. A recent study by researchers at MD Anderson Cancer Center found that a comprehensive program succeeded in keeping nearly half of people with cancer off cigarettes for at least nine months.

The individually tailored program includes an hourlong in-person consultation, six to eight follow-up counseling sessions and treatment with nicotine patches or the smoking cessation medications Zyban (bupropion) or Chantix (varenicline).

“Many cancer patients wonder if quitting smoking once they already have cancer is worth it,” says study coauthor Diane Beneventi, PhD. “The truth is, quitting at the time of diagnosis increases the chance of survival by 30% to 40%. Patients also have less chance of a recurrence or secondary cancer if they quit. They will have fewer side effects, and their treatments will be more effective. Longer term, they will enjoy a better quality of life.”

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http://beta.docker.cancerhealth.com/article/late-quit-smoking