



**Policy Statement of the German Dental Association  
(Bundeszahnärztekammer – BZÄK)  
on „Tobacco“ (smoking)**

**Tobacco and dental practice**

The use of tobacco is harmful to general health, it is a cause of addiction and of many preventable illnesses, chronic disabilities and death. The use of tobacco also causes an increased risk for oral cancer, influences seriousness and process of periodontal diseases and other deleterious conditions of the oral cavity biology. Smoking (use of tobacco) affects in a negative way a great number of therapeutic measures and interventions of oral health care.

The German Dental Association (Bundeszahnärztekammer – BZÄK) urges all members of the dental team to take decisive action to reduce tobacco use and nicotine addiction among the general public. In the interest of a cause-orientated prevention of oral diseases, it is necessary to integrate instruction on the cessation of smoking as well as information on tobacco use related to oral health into the routine dental practice. This is an essential contribution to dentistry and oral care in order to prevent systemic diseases and disabilities. At the same time, risks and interactions of systemic and oral diseases can be reduced.

**Tobacco education**

Brief interactions and talks with tobacco users in connection with case recording and anamnesis findings offer the possibility of giving direct advice, supportive material and follow-up dates.

Smoking habits and tobacco use of the patient can lead to a reduction of therapeutic treatments or to their failure respectively, and indeed they are of essential importance for a long-term care related to the risk factors. Thus, it is necessary to take influence on the tobacco habits of the patient via the dentist or a dental provider.

The German Dental Association (Bundeszahnärztekammer – BZÄK) urges all oral health institutions and all continuing education providers to integrate tobacco-related subjects into their programmes and to stress in particular preventive programmes in this respect.

### **Protection of children and young adults**

The adverse and negative consequences of environmental tobacco smoke are particularly severe for children and young adults. The German Dental Association (Bundeszahnärztekammer – BZÄK) supports public and professional education programmes and activities orientated towards a growing-up of infants, children and young adults in a smoke- and tobacco-free environment.

### **Prevention**

More than 80% of adults using tobacco started to smoke before the age of eighteen. Tobacco use among children and young adults produces a nicotine dependency – a risk which is often completely underestimated by young people themselves.

The German Dental Association (Bundeszahnärztekammer – BZÄK) supports all measures that prevent the initiation of tobacco use (primary prevention).