



the women's
the royal women's hospital

Media Release

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Subsidised patches encourage women to quit

The Royal Women's Hospital has welcomed today's Federal Government announcement that the cost of nicotine patches will be subsidised for concession card holders from 1 February.

Dr Ian McCahon, head of the Women's Alcohol and Drug Service (WADS), said the initiative means many women, including those who access WADS, may feel encouraged to stop smoking.

WADS was established at the Women's in 1987 as a specialist clinic for pregnant women with drug and alcohol issues. It is now a statewide drug and alcohol service that provides intensive pregnancy care for women with drug or alcohol issues, as well as professional support and education programs.

"We know it can be hard to stop smoking. When you are on a low income, as some of our patients are, the cost of nicotine patches can be prohibitive," Dr McCahon said.

While the use of nicotine patches is not recommended in pregnancy, women can use them before they get pregnant, he said.

"We know that impending motherhood is a time when women may be most motivated to improve their health and the outcome for their baby.

"We actively encourage women to quit or reduce their alcohol and tobacco consumption before they get pregnant if possible, or while they are pregnant.

"The reduced cost of nicotine patches will mean that women smokers wishing to get pregnant are more supported to do so."

Dr McCahon said tobacco smoking during pregnancy is a significant, yet preventable, cause of miscarriage, premature birth and low birth weight.

Midwives at the Women's pregnancy clinics have received Quit Victoria training to counsel pregnant smokers, and to offer practical support to help them stop smoking or reduce their cigarette consumption.

Visit: www.thewomens.org.au/AlcoholDrugService
Or call 137848, Quitline Pregnancy Callback Service

For more information please call:

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