

The Great American Smokeout is Thursday, November 21st



Every November for the past 38 years, the American Cancer Society sponsors the Great American Smokeout and encourages smokers to quit for at least 1 day in the hope that this might challenge them to stop permanently. It's never too late to quit!

In addition to inspiring people to take charge of their health, the Smokeout has raised public awareness of the dangers of smoking and the sly tactics of the tobacco companies to get youngsters addicted early.

There is good news to report: Fewer U.S. adults are smoking and those who do light up are smoking fewer cigarettes each day. According to a report released September 6, 2011, by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 19.3% of adults said they smoked last year, down from about 21% in 2005. The rate for smoking 30 or more cigarettes daily dropped to about 8% from almost 13% during the same time period. This means that 3 million fewer adults are smoking.

Tobacco use is the single most preventable cause of death and disease in the U.S. Each year in the U.S., cigarette smoking and exposure causes 443,000 deaths or about 1 of 5.

Most people know that using tobacco can cause lung cancer, but few know it's also a risk factor for many other kinds of cancer, including cancer of the mouth, voice box (larynx), throat, esophagus, bladder, kidney, pancreas, cervix, and stomach, as well as some leukemias. It's also linked to a number of other health problems, from heart disease to stroke. And there is no safe way to use tobacco. Cigars, pipes, and other types of smokeless tobacco all pose serious health risks.

The American Cancer Society encourages tobacco users to set the Great American Smokeout – November 21st this year – as the day they make a plan to quit. When you're ready to quit, they are there to help. Many tools exist to help people quit now. Contact the American Cancer Society at 1-800-ACS-2345 for support - 24/7. Or check out: www.smokefree.gov

Benefits of Quitting

20 Minutes After Quitting:

- Your heart rate drops to a normal level.

12 Hours After Quitting:

- The carbon monoxide level in your blood drops to normal.

2 Weeks to 3 Months After Quitting:

- Your risk of having a heart attack begins to drop.
- Your lung function begins to improve.

1 to 9 Months After Quitting:

- Your coughing and shortness of breath decrease.

1 Year After Quitting:

- Your added risk of coronary heart disease is half that of a smoker's.

5 to 15 Years After Quitting:

- Your risk of having a stroke is reduced to that of a nonsmoker's.
- Your risk of getting cancer of the mouth, throat, or esophagus is half that of a smoker's.

10 Years After Quitting:

- Your risk of dying from lung cancer is about half that of a smoker's.
- Your risk of getting bladder cancer is half that of a smoker's.
- Your risk of getting cervical cancer or cancer of the larynx, kidney, or pancreas decreases.

15 Years After Quitting:

- Your risk of coronary heart disease is the same as that of a nonsmoker.

Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The Health Consequences of Smoking: A Report of the Surgeon General.

If you have questions or would like more information, contact Jessica Wildfong, Prevention Services Coordinator for Bedford Youth and Family Services. She can be reached at 781-275-7727 or jessicaw@bedfordma.gov