

The Great American Smokeout



What is it?

Each year on the third Thursday of November, communities all over the nation take part in the American Cancer Society's Great American Smokeout. During this event, tobacco use is publicized and smokers are challenged to quit using tobacco for at least 24 hours.

The Great American Smokeout, 2009 will be on Thursday, November 19th!

If you're a tobacco user, the Great American Smokeout is a great time to take the challenge of quitting. By choosing to quit for at least one day, you can use the time to think about your tobacco use, and prove to yourself that you *can* make the choice to quit using tobacco.

Why should I take part in the Great American Smokeout?

Avoiding tobacco use is one of the most important things you can do maintain your health.

Did you know...

- Smoking causes one out of every five deaths in the United States. In fact, people who smoke die an average of 14 years earlier than non-smokers.²
- Children raised in a household where there is smoking are more likely to have health problems, such as ear infections and asthma.²

However, tobacco use also has many other consequences. Which of the following consequences concern you the most?

Possible Health Consequences	Other consequences
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Increased risk of many types of cancer▪ More frequent colds and bronchitis▪ High blood pressure▪ Increased risk of stroke and heart disease▪ Complications with pregnancy▪ Worsening of existing health conditions▪ Delayed healing after illness, surgery, or injury▪ Possibility of changing the way your body reacts to certain medications	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Bad breath and lingering smell of smoke▪ Discolored teeth and fingernails▪ Financial burden▪ Premature wrinkling of the skin▪ Hassle of using tobacco in public▪ Not always socially accepted▪ Giving children the message that it is okay to use tobacco▪ Shortness of breath when taking part in daily activities

Even if you've been a smoker for years, it's never too late to make an impact on your health. In fact, for every day you remain tobacco-free, your immune system improves.³

"CIGNA" and the "Tree of Life" logo are registered service marks of CIGNA Intellectual Property, Inc., licensed for use by CIGNA Corporation and its operating subsidiaries. All products and services are provided exclusively by such operating subsidiaries and not by CIGNA Corporation. Such operating subsidiaries include International Rehabilitation Associates, Inc. (Intracorp), CIGNA Behavioral Health, Inc., vielife Limited, Connecticut General Life Insurance Company and HMO subsidiaries of CIGNA Health Corporation.

©2008 CIGNA

How can I participate?

If you're thinking about taking part in the Great American Smokeout, congratulate yourself! You've taken the first step in taking control of your health. Here are some tips to help you make the day a success.

- **Think about why quitting smoking is important to you.** The reasons can be different for everyone. Perhaps you want to set a good example for your children. Or maybe you want to improve or maintain your health. Or perhaps you'd like to spend your money on something other than cigarettes. Use your reasons as your motivation.
- **Be prepared.** Come up with a plan to keep yourself busy during the times you normally smoke. Think about things you can do instead of smoking and how you will manage your cravings. It may help you to know that a tobacco craving only lasts three to five minutes!
- **Decrease the amount of stress in your life.** It's common for people to smoke when they're feeling stressed. Evaluate the areas of your life that cause you stress and try to come up with healthy solutions to manage those situations.
- **Get some support.** Your likelihood of quitting for good is increased if you have some means of support such as nicotine replacement therapy, counseling, and the encouragement of friends and family members.¹
- **Reward yourself.** Congratulate yourself on any progress you make. However, make sure not to replace your habit with another unhealthy behavior. Instead, choose healthy behaviors that will have a positive effect on your well-being. For example, why not go for a walk with a friend or get a massage?
- **Don't give up.** If you experience a setback, don't give up hope. It's actually much more common to experience a setback than not. Instead of getting down on yourself, take the opportunity to learn from your experiences to help yourself achieve success.

Overcoming an addiction is a continuous journey that requires an ongoing and conscious effort. But if you're thinking about quitting smoking, it's important to remember that everyone has to start somewhere...why not join millions of others this year on the Great American Smokeout and start making strides to improve your health one day at a time?

To find the Great American Smokeout Resources in your area:

http://www.cancer.org/docroot/PED/content/PED_10_2x_Local_Smokeout_Resources.asp

The Great American Smokeout



References:

1. American Cancer Society.(2006). *All About the Event*. Retrieved September 14, 2007 from the World Wide Web:
http://www.cancer.org/docroot/PED/content/PED_10_5_Great_American_Smokeout_History.asp
2. The Great American SmokeoutAmerican Cancer Society. (2006). *Cigarette Smoking*. Retrieved September 14, 2007 from the World Wide Web:
http://www.cancer.org/docroot/PED/content/PED_10_2X_Cigarette_Smoking.asp
3. Sopor, ML; Kozak, W. (1998). Immunomodulatory effects of cigarette smoke. *Journal of Neuroimmunology*. 83(1-2):148-56.

This material is provided by CIGNA for informational/educational purposes only. It is not intended as medical/clinical advice. Only a healthcare provider can make a diagnosis or recommend a treatment plan. For more information about your behavioral health benefits, you can call the member services or behavioral health telephone number listed on your healthcare identification card.

“CIGNA” and the “Tree of Life” logo are registered service marks of CIGNA Intellectual Property, Inc., licensed for use by CIGNA Corporation and its operating subsidiaries. All products and services are provided exclusively by such operating subsidiaries and not by CIGNA Corporation. Such operating subsidiaries include International Rehabilitation Associates, Inc. (Intracorp), CIGNA Behavioral Health, Inc., vielife Limited, Connecticut General Life Insurance Company and HMO subsidiaries of CIGNA Health Corporation.

©2008 CIGNA