



NEWS RELEASE

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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Health Department encourages smokers and non-smokers to take part in Great American Smokeout

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The Alabama Department of Public Health is encouraging smokers as well as non-smokers to recognize the American Cancer Society's Great American Smokeout Thursday, Nov. 18. The Great American Smokeout challenges smokers to give up cigarettes for one day. The health department's Tobacco Prevention and Control Division is also asking non-smokers to encourage smokers that day and offer them moral support as they give up smoking for 24 hours.

Tobacco users who want to quit in Alabama can also call 1-800-QUIT-NOW for free counseling services to assist them in quitting smoking. In 2005, through funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Alabama Tobacco Cessation Quitline will offer expanded services and individualized counseling to help smokers and smokeless tobacco users kick the habit.

In Alabama, the consequences of smoking are devastating. More than 7,000 Alabamians die each year as a result of tobacco use, and another 1,000 youth and adults die from exposure to secondhand smoke. One in four adults is a smoker, and according to the Alabama Youth Tobacco Survey conducted in early 2004, 24 percent of high school students are current smokers.

The benefits of quitting smoking are numerous. According to the American Cancer Society, the risk of heart attack decreases within 24 hours of not smoking. Additionally, the risk of cancer, stroke, and lung disease are greatly reduced.

The American Cancer Society lists the following strategies while quitting smoking for a day:

- Stay positive by picturing yourself successfully not smoking that day.
- Perform relaxation exercises when you feel the urge to smoke.
- Nibble on low-calorie snacks or chew gum during the day.
- After dinner, try a cup of tea instead of a cigarette.

The Alabama Department of Public Health is taking part in the Great American Smokeout by participating in several activities statewide. Below are some scheduled events:

Brewton

Thursday, Nov. 18 at 5:30 p.m.

Various speakers on the harmful effects of Smoking
D.W. McMillan Memorial Hospital - Community Room
Contact Tina Findley, (251) 867-5765

Huntsville

Thursday, Nov. 18 at 6 p.m.

City of Huntsville Parking and Public Transit Building
Public Forum
Contact Joy Rhodes-Watkins, (256) 306-2430

Linden

Wednesday, Nov. 17

Linden Elementary School K-5th Coloring Contest

Thursday, Nov. 18

Linden High School visit to high school health class
George P. Austin – video for 6th-8th graders
Contact Niko Phillips, (334) 874-2550

Selma

Friday, Nov. 19

Information Booth at Selma Mall
Contact Niko Phillips, (334) 874-2550

Tuscumbia – Shoals Area

Thursday, Nov. 18

Partnership with the Tobacco-Free Coalition of the Shoals
Encouraging restaurants to go smoke-free for the day
Contact Lerrie Harris, (256) 383-1231

11/16/04