



NEWS RELEASE

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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Alabama Tobacco Quitline takes part in the Great American Smokeout

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The Alabama Tobacco Quitline encourages smokers to take part in the American Cancer Society's Great American Smokeout Thursday, Nov. 17. The Great American Smokeout challenges smokers to give up cigarettes for one day. This is the first Great American Smokeout in which the Health Department's Alabama Tobacco Quitline, 1-800-Quit-Now, is available for free counseling.

The Quitline provides counseling services for Alabamians who want to quit smoking or chewing tobacco. In April 2005, through funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Alabama Tobacco Cessation Quitline was launched and it has received more than 4,000 calls to date.

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. Annual healthcare costs in Alabama directly caused by smoking are \$1.38 billion. 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 CDC, the risk of heart attack decreases within 24 hours of not smoking. Additionally, the risk of cancer, stroke and lung disease are greatly reduced. Within 20 minutes after smoking that last cigarette, the body makes changes that reduce the harm to the body from smoking.

Tips to help you quit from the Alabama Tobacco Quitline, 1-800-Quit-Now:

- Plan something enjoyable to do every day that does not include tobacco.
- Watch people around you who do not use tobacco.
- Ask yourself, "Do I really want this cigarette right now?"
- Wash the clothes you regularly wear.
- Clean out your car.
- Give away all your ashtrays.
- Make a commitment to having a smoke-free home.

To learn how to quit for good call the Alabama Tobacco Quitline for free counseling, 1-800-QUIT-NOW or 1-800-784-8669. The Alabama Department of Public Health is taking part in the Great American Smokeout by participating in several activities statewide. Listed here are some scheduled events:

Decatur

Thursday, Nov. 17 at 6 p.m.

Public Forum on the Effects of Secondhand Smoke Exposure
Tri-County Health Center, 510 Cherry St.
Contact: Joy Rhodes-Watkins, (256) 306-2430
Members of medical community will answer questions.

Dothan

Thursday Nov. 17, 10 a.m. -- 2 p.m.

Effects of Secondhand Smoke Display
Wiregrass Commons Mall, 900 Commons Drive
Contact: Judy Guiler, (334) 699-2813
Residents can sign a clean air petition.

Thursday, Nov. 17, 10 a.m.--2 p.m.

Great American SmokeOut Pledge Wall providing cessation information.
Southeast Alabama Medical Center
1108 Ross Clark Circle

Fairfield

Thursday, Nov. 17, 6 -- 8 p.m.

Clean Indoor Air Forum
Fairfield Civic Center - Meeting Room - 6509 E. J. Oliver Blvd.
Contact: Virginia Bozeman, (205) 930-1485

Florence - Shoals Area

Thursday, Nov. 17, 12 noon

Activity in the Park (Addicted to O2) - "O" Ring -- Students Promote Clean Air
Wilson Park -- Downtown Florence
Contact: Lerrie Harris, (256) 383-1231 -- Colbert County Health Department
Diane Peeples, (256) 767-0825 -- American Cancer Society
Valerie Thigpen, (256) 757-2102 -- Lauderdale County Schools

Thursday, Nov. 17, 6 – 7:30 p.m.

Public Forum -- Clean Air Ordinance
Lauderdale County Health Department, 4112 Chisholm Road
Contact: Lerrie Harris, (256) 383-1231

Montgomery

Thursday, Nov. 17, 10 a.m.-- 2 p.m.

Great American Smokeout and Community Awareness Day
Love Center International Church, 2830 Creative St.
Contact: Demetra Peoples, LBSW, (334) 206-7071

Pell City

Wednesday, Nov. 16, 9 a.m. – 6 p.m.

Dangers of Secondhand Smoke Display and Secondhand Smoke Presentation
Pell City Health Fair, 2801 Stemley Bridge Road, (205) 338-9713
Contact: LaTosha Croft, (205) 338-3357

Thursday, Nov. 17, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Educating students about the dangers secondhand smoke
Walter M. Kennedy Elementary, 250 Otis Perry Drive, (205) 338-7896
Contact: LaTosha Croft, (205) 338-3357

Thursday, Nov. 17

Area restaurants participate by going smoke free for the day
Contact: LaTosha Croft, (205) 338-3357

Rehobeth

Wednesday, Nov. 16, 8 a.m. -- 3 p.m.

Great American Smokeout activities for SpectraCare
Great American Smokeout Graffiti Wall painted by Consumer Science students
Rehobeth High School, 373 Malvern Road

Selma

Thursday, Nov. 17, 10 a.m. -- 2 p.m.

Community Awareness Day-and Great American Smokeout
Carl Morgan Convention Center, 211 Washington St.
Contact: Niko Phillips, 334-874-2550

Tuscaloosa

Thursday, Nov. 17 – 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Informational Booth - Free information to help tobacco users go cold turkey.
McFarland Mall, 900 Skyland Blvd. East
Contact: Fayette Royal, (205) 554-4558

11/16/05