



NEWS RELEASE

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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Great American Smokeout is the perfect time to quit smoking

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The American Cancer Society marks Thursday, Nov. 20, as the Great American Smokeout, an event that calls for tobacco users across the nation to quit for 24 hours.

Smoking is the number one cause of preventable death and disease in the nation. More than 7,500 adults over the age of 35 in Alabama die each year from smoking related illnesses. According to the 2013 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, 21.5 percent of Alabama adults are current smokers. Also, the 2013 Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System reports that 18 percent of high school youth currently smoke.

The goal of the Great American Smokeout is to get Americans to quit using tobacco. Research has shown that after just 12 hours of quitting smoking, the carbon monoxide level in the blood drops to normal. After just two weeks, circulation begins to improve while lung function increases.

In Alabama, resources are available to help residents quit smoking. The Alabama Tobacco Quitline offers free telephone and online coaching help to anyone ready to quit tobacco use, or to anyone who wants more information about quitting. The Quitline offers a personalized quit plan, and two weeks of free nicotine patches if enrolled in coaching and medically eligible. Quitline services include e-mail, text messaging and mobile apps.

"More than 140,000 people have called the Quitline for help since it began in 2005," said Dr. Donald E. Williamson, Alabama's state health officer. "Studies have shown that you are twice as likely to quit and remain tobacco free if you get help," he said.

To get help or for more information on quitting tobacco, go to www.quitnowalabama.com or call 1-800-QUITNOW (1-800-784-8669). Phone lines are open from 6 a.m. to midnight daily.

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