



NEWS RELEASE

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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No excuses to put off quitting tobacco, the Great American Smokeout is Nov. 19

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Excuses to put off quitting tobacco use just don't hold up anymore.

Thanks to the state and federally funded Alabama Tobacco Quitline, any Alabama resident can have free help to quit tobacco use. No excuses. No judgments. Just free help. The Quitline is a free telephone service that helps people quit tobacco. Services include coaching, a personalized quit plan, and eight weeks of free nicotine patches if enrolled in the coaching program and medically eligible.

The American Cancer Society marks Thursday, Nov. 19, as the Great American Smokeout, an event that calls for tobacco users across the nation to quit for 24 hours. In Alabama, 21.5 percent of adults are smokers. Nationally, the rate is about 18 percent.

Smoking is the number one cause of preventable death and disease in the nation and kills more than 8,600 adults in Alabama each year. Annually, the state spends more than \$1.88 billion in health care costs directly caused by smoking.

"We can help you quit," said Quitline Manager Jabari Sullen. "But you have to make the call." Calling 1-800-784-8669 from any Alabama area code connects you with the Quitline, said Sullen. Users can also register for services online at www.quitnowalabama.com.

The Quitline will schedule phone coaching sessions for times that fit your schedule. If you are eligible, the nicotine patches are mailed directly to your home. "The phone call is free, the patches are free, and the plan is free," said Sullen.

Callers will be asked to set a quit date within 30 days and work with a coach to make a plan. Coaching calls are a requirement to receive the free patches. The combination of both increase the chances of being successful.

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. "There is nothing to gain and much to lose by continuing to use tobacco," Sullen said.

For more information on quitting tobacco, go to www.quitnowalabama.com or call 1-800-QUITNOW. Phone lines are open from 6 a.m. to midnight seven days a week.

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