



“Just Say No” to Tobacco

Department offers classes to help people quit smoking

Tobacco use is costly, in terms of both lives and money. Every year, nearly 10,000 Missouri residents die from tobacco-related diseases. In addition, more than \$2 billion is spent every year in Missouri to treat smoking-related illnesses. Even non-smokers are affected, as secondhand smoke causes an average of 1,150 deaths in Missouri annually.

Many smokers believe that the effects from smoking are permanent or irreversible. This couldn't be farther from the truth. Did you know that within 20 minutes of quitting, your blood pressure drops to normal? Within 24 hours, your chance of heart attack decreases, and within two weeks lung function increases up to 30 percent. In time, an ex-smoker's risk of diseases like lung cancer can equal that of someone who has never smoked.

The recent rise in the federal cigarette tax to \$1.01 per pack has many smokers looking to quit. For those who have tried to quit before, or for those who are nervous about trying for the first time, group support can make the difference. The St. Charles County Department of Community Health and the Environment is offering an inexpensive, group support program for smokers who wish to quit. Freedom From Smoking (FFS) is an evidence based tobacco cessation program developed by the American Lung Association (ALA).

FFS is a seven week behavior modification course that helps smokers learn about their smoking habit, build motivation to quit, and provides support needed to stay tobacco free. This class systematically walks individuals through the quitting process and helps to address not only the physical

addiction to tobacco, but the psychological connection to tobacco use. A review of stop-smoking aids such as nicotine replacements or prescriptions specific in assisting the quit process is included in this program. This course is a step-by-step behavior change approach to unlearn the automatic, addictive behavior of smoking, focusing on how to quit and stay tobacco free.

The best success stories come from individuals who have taken a class on behavior change along with nicotine replacement therapy to aid with the nicotine withdrawal. According to ALA, up to 90 percent of smokers who attended these classes quit smoking during the class.

“If you tried to quit using tobacco before, Freedom From Smoking can help you reach your goal of being tobacco free, as there is something to learn from each quit attempt,” said Hollie Milam, health educator for the department. “The decision to stop smoking is one of the most important things you can do to

improve your health, and this class can help.”

Freedom From Smoking will be offered several times throughout the year. The next class begins on May 6. Families who receive WIC services can register for free. For more information on quitting tobacco, or to register for classes, call (636) 949-7413.

In addition to offering cessation classes, the Department of Community Health and the Environment is committed to providing tobacco prevention education and cessation resources to any interested individual or community group. For a listing of classes offered, visit our website at www.scchealth.org.



Tobacco is one of the most addictive substances on the planet, but there is help to quit



Stop Smoking Methods: A Comparison

Cold Turkey Abruptly quitting is a popular, if not always successful, method of breaking the smoking habit. According to the American Cancer Society, more than 80 percent of smokers who want to quit have tried “cold turkey.” However, studies indicate that less than 5 percent of smokers who try to quit using willpower alone will succeed.

Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT) These products include nicotine gum, patches, inhalers, and nasal sprays. About 30 percent of smokers who rely on NRT alone succeed in quitting. Researchers believe that the low success rate is because smokers fail to use these products appropriately.

Prescription Medication There are two pills approved for use in smoking cessation therapy: Zyban (bupropion) and Chantix (varenicline). Studies indicate that up to 40 percent of smokers who use these medications succeed in kicking the habit. Because these medications are prescription only and not always covered by health insurance, many smokers pass them up in favor of less expensive (but sometimes less effective) therapies.

Support Groups and Therapy Counseling and behavioral therapy is especially effective in achieving long-term independence from tobacco, according to the American Cancer Society. Around 15 percent of smokers who use support groups and therapy to quit achieve their goal in a single attempt.

Acupuncture This method involves placing needles at trigger points to stimulate nerve endings in hopes of eliminating the urge to use tobacco. Auriculotherapy is a version of acupuncture in which a laser or electronic pulsing device is used on the ear, instead of needles. Acupuncture is successful for some people, although there is little scientific evidence to support its effectiveness.



Secondhand smoke contains deadly gases like hydrogen cyanide that can be especially harmful to your kids sweet kids.

Don't pass gas. Take it outside.
Dontpassgas.org 1 888-NO-PASS-GAS



Take the Tobacco Use and Awareness Survey

The St. Charles County Department of Community Health and the Environment has partnered with Missouri's Maternal Child Health Services to prevent and reduce smoking among adolescents and women by creating a community survey in conjunction with several community groups assessing community tobacco use and awareness.

The survey will help target tobacco use prevention messages as well as address and tailor cessation education programs. In addition, this survey will also inform community groups on public opinion on smoke-free workplace protection.

You can participate in this survey by visiting www.scchealth.org and clicking on “Tobacco Use and Awareness Survey” to share your knowledge and opinions on tobacco use.

Tobacco By the Numbers in Missouri

17¢: state tax per pack of cigarettes (second-lowest in the U.S.)

24.6: percentage of Missouri adults who smoke

49th: Missouri's rank among the states for spending on tobacco prevention

8,500: number of teens in Missouri who take up smoking every year

\$108,000,000: annual state tobacco tax revenue

Source: Tobacco Free Kids