



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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NEWS RELEASE

Ring in the New Year Smokefree

Millersburg, OH –

Quitting the use of tobacco and nicotine containing products has both immediate and long-lasting health benefits. The negative effects of smoking or using other tobacco containing products are well documented, but did you know that within just minutes of tobacco cessation a person's health begins to improve? Research shows that within 20 minutes of quitting, a person's heart rate and blood pressure begin to decrease. Within two weeks, their circulation and lung functionality begin to improve. A year after quitting, their risk of coronary heart disease and Heart Attack is reduced. Within five years, their risk of mouth, throat, esophagus, and bladder cancer is decreased by half, and their risk of cervical cancer and stroke decreases to that of a nonsmoker. Finally, ten years after quitting, dying from lung cancer becomes 50% less likely compared with a current smoker's risk.

So, why doesn't everyone just quit? There is no simple answer to this question but allow me to sum it up as efficiently as possible: because it is not that easy! However, "not easy" does not mean "not possible," or even "not *probable*." It is important when considering quitting to have a plan, proper training for whatever tobacco cessation products or aids you may use, and clear expectations of what you will experience in terms of withdrawal and other symptoms and how you will cope with them. The success rate for people trying to quit who do not seek proper professional training is only 3-5% compared to reported rates of 40-55% for those who do. This training is simple, does not take long and is easily accessible, and for most people it will mean the difference between successfully quitting or not.

Here is an example from my experience that highlights how simple and quick training can be a key to success. For many years there have been tobacco cessation products on the market in the form of gum or lozenges. However, I have been astounded by the number of patients I have talked to that failed with these products while using them improperly. Nicotine gum and lozenges are not meant to be consumed like normal chewing gum or throat lozenges. Rather, they are to be "parked" between the teeth and gums in a manner that creates a tingling sensation as the nicotine is absorbed. Once the sensation subsides, the product is to be moved to another part of the mouth to be "parked" again. A simple one-minute conversation with a professional can be the difference between someone achieving success or failure with products like these.

Another important key to successful tobacco cessation is having a plan for dealing with withdrawal and the other effects of quitting. One helpful tool I have found is having the right mindset

when experiencing these effects. For example, I encourage those going through withdrawal to not think of restlessness and irritability as symptoms, but rather as signs that their body is recovering. It is also important for them to focus on the fact that these effects will subside with time and many people find they disappear in just 2-4 weeks. These are just a few examples, and there are many other tools and tricks that can be used to replace old habits with newer, healthier ones, the key is knowing where to find them. One easily accessible resource is the Ohio Tobacco Quitline.

The Ohio Tobacco Quitline is a free resource available for everyone in Ohio that provides coaching and support during the quitting process. Enrolled participants receive five scheduled calls with a trained coach to assist with the development and following through of a quit plan. Since the Ohio Tobacco Quitline is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, participants can call at any time when extra support is needed. Participants can also choose between a two-week supply of patches, gum, or lozenges with each completed coaching call, and may be eligible for up to eight weeks of free nicotine replacement therapy. When used properly, these cessation products can double or triple the likelihood of successfully quitting for good.

Since every quit journey is different, the Ohio Tobacco Quitline offers specialized programs that increase the chances of successfully quitting for certain groups. The Ohio Tobacco Quitline's program for pregnant women includes nine coaching calls with the same coach that take place throughout the pregnancy and up to six months postpartum, a time when relapse is common. For each coaching call completed, participants will receive a gift card to help with pregnancy and postpartum expenses. The Ohio Tobacco Quitline also has a behavioral health program for individuals with mental health and substance use conditions. The specialized program consists of seven coaching calls and participants can receive up to ten weeks of nicotine replacement therapy.

The Ohio Tobacco Quitline's website offers numerous resources as well, including an online community, educational materials, and interactive tools that can assist you with deciding to quit. One eye-opening interactive tool is the smoking calculator that estimates how much tobacco costs you, both in terms of your dollars spent and your days of life lost to tobacco use. For example, using the average price of cigarettes in Ohio, a pack a day smoker spends roughly \$2,200 on cigarettes each year and loses approximately 28 days from their lifespan for each year they continue to smoke. Quitting not only improves your health but also puts money back in your pocket.

There are countless benefits to tobacco cessation and with the resources currently available, breaking your bad habit is more doable than ever. A successful plan to quit is well-detailed and thought out, and the best plans are not achieved all alone. Be sure to make use of the resources available to you. These include hotlines, coaches, and healthcare professionals ready and willing to help you achieve your goal of quitting. Make your plan to quit today. Interested in enrolling in the Ohio Tobacco Quitline? Call 1-800-QUIT-NOW or go to ohioquits.org

Written by Joel Gauze, PharmD, RPh, Premier Pharmacy Services, Inc., and Kelly Dremann, Holmes County General Health District.

There is no safe level of nicotine use and the benefits of quitting begin immediately. There is **free** help available.

▶ **1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669)**

▶ **ohioquits.org**



**Department of
Health**

Tobacco Prevention and Cessation
Quit Line: ohioquits.org