



NEWS RELEASE

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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Quitters take note: the Great American Smokeout is November 17

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Quit it. No, really. For the Great American Smokeout November 17, quitting tobacco for just one day can be the start of a healthier life for you and your family.

The American Cancer Society-sponsored Great American Smokeout calls for tobacco users across the nation to quit for 24 hours on Thursday. In Alabama, 21.4 percent of adults are smokers. Nationally, the rate is about 17 percent.

The Alabama Tobacco Quitline provides help to any state resident who wants to quit tobacco. "The Quitline is a free telephone service that helps people quit any form of tobacco with coaching, a quit plan, and up to eight weeks of nicotine patches if enrolled in the program and medically eligible," Quitline Manager Jabari Sullen said. "All services are free. There are no excuses, no judgments, just free help," he said.

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," Sullen said. "But you have to pick up the phone and call." Calling 1-800 Quit Now (1-800-784-8669) from an Alabama area code connects residents with the Quitline. Users can also register for services online at www.quitnowalabama.com.

The Quitline schedules phone sessions for times convenient to the caller. If the caller is eligible, the nicotine patches are mailed directly to the home. 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 because the combination increases the chances of being a successful quitter.

Smoking harms nearly every organ in the body, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Those exposed to secondhand smoke from cigarettes can become ill; new studies show that thirdhand smoke lingering on hair, clothes, carpets and walls is hazardous as well. Even household pets suffer from exposure to secondhand and thirdhand smoke.

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

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