



KENDALL COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

World No Tobacco Day

World No Tobacco Day is celebrated around the world every year on May 31. This yearly celebration is intended to encourage smokers to quit and to raise public awareness about the health impacts of tobacco. Each year approximately 440,000 people die from their tobacco use and 65,000 people die from secondhand smoke.

Tobacco addiction is a global epidemic that is the second major cause of death in the world. In the United States, it is the number one cause of preventable death, killing about 53,000 people a year. Tobacco kills people at the height of their productivity, depriving families of breadwinners and nations of a healthy workforce.

Tobacco is unique among legal consumer products- and not in a positive sense. It is the only product, when used exactly as directed, kills its consumer. Up to one half of all smokers will die from a tobacco-related disease, and half of these will die prematurely.

Even a few cigarettes a day are harmful. Research has shown that people who smoke as few as 1-4 cigarettes a day have significantly more risk of dying than nonsmokers do. There is no safe level of smoking. Reducing smoking can reduce lung cancer risk, but that risk is still significantly higher than that of nonsmokers. In addition, cutting back does not reduce the risk of other lung diseases or of heart attacks.

The benefits of quitting are immediate. Within 24 hours of your last cigarette, your blood pressure and pulse return to normal, the carbon monoxide level rises (making you feel less tired and more energetic), and your chance of having a heart attack decreases. A week after quitting your ability to smell and taste improve, nicotine is eliminated from your body, and your bronchial tubes start to relax, making breathing increasingly easier and lung capacity greater. Within a month, coughing, sinus congestion, tiredness and shortness of breath reduces; and after 15 years, your risk of death returns to nearly the level of a person who has never smoked.

If you are a smoker, the Kendall County Health Department asks you to consider the following three questions:

- How much do I smoke?
- Why do I smoke?
- What will be my most difficult hurdle in quitting?

These questions will help you identify what you need to do in order to quit. If you're unsure about quitting, ask yourself which you want to do most: smoke or stop. The fact is everyone who smokes will stop sooner or later- the question is whether it is by choice or by death. Every day thousands of smokers quit and stay quit for life. It can be done.

Many resources are available free of charge or at a low cost. To learn more about local resources for quitting call the Kendall County Health Department at (630) 553-9100. You can also call the Illinois Tobacco Quitline at 1-866-QUIT-YES for free help in quitting.