



STATE OF OKLAHOMA

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Free nicotine patches, gum, or lozenges now available through Oklahoma Tobacco Helpline – while supplies last

Two-week “starter kits” offered free in observance of Mother’s Day

OKLAHOMA CITY – In observance of Mother’s Day and to focus attention on encouraging women to quit tobacco, the Oklahoma Tobacco Helpline is currently offering free nicotine replacement products while supplies last to both women and men who enroll in the Helpline’s tobacco cessation program at 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669). The free “starter kit” contains a two-week supply of nicotine patches, gum or lozenges, depending on each person’s needs, to help callers kick-start their quit attempt.

“We’re very excited to be able to make this special offer to help Oklahoma mothers and families succeed in their efforts to break the addiction,” said Tracey Strader, executive director of the Oklahoma Tobacco Settlement Endowment Trust. “Studies have shown that kids whose parents use tobacco are much more likely to become tobacco users,” said Strader. “Mother’s Day is all about families, and there’s no better way to say ‘I love you’ than to quit for your health and the health of your family.”

According to the state health department, 57 percent, or over 370,000, of all current Oklahoma smokers stopped smoking for at least one day during the last year because they were trying to quit. Effective treatments such as the medications and “quit coaching” available through the Helpline greatly increase the chances that a tobacco user will successfully quit for good.

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The Mother's Day program focuses on encouraging women to quit and to reduce the tremendous health impact of smoking on Oklahoma women and families. According to the Oklahoma State Department of Health:

- Smoking kills over 2,200 Oklahoma women each year. This represents one in every eight deaths among women in Oklahoma.
- Smoking *triples* the risk of heart disease among middle-aged women. Over 800 Oklahoma women die from smoking-caused cardiovascular disease each year.
- Women who smoke increase their risk of death from lung cancer by almost *12 times*. In Oklahoma, one-third (33 percent) of all tobacco-caused cancer disease deaths are among women, including over 600 women who die from smoking-caused cancers of the trachea, lung, or bronchus.
- The risk of death from bronchitis and emphysema is increased by more than *10 times* among women who smoke. These respiratory diseases kill more than 600 Oklahoma women each year.
- Smoking causes many adverse reproductive and early childhood effects, including an increased risk for infertility, preterm delivery, stillbirth, low birth weight, and sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS).
- Postmenopausal women who smoke have lower bone density than women who never smoked. Women who smoke have an increased risk for hip fracture.

"We hope the starter kits will encourage callers to take the first step in a successful quit attempt and to complete their treatment with products obtained through their health insurance or with the money saved by not purchasing tobacco products," said Strader.

Professional Quit Coaches® work with Helpline callers to develop a quit plan tailored to their individual needs. Up to four follow-up calls with a quit coach are also provided free of charge. The Helpline's hours of operation are 7 a.m. to 11 p.m. seven days a week, and staff will return any messages left after hours. Services are also available in Spanish by calling 1-800-793-1552. For more information on the Helpline, please see: <http://www.ok.gov/tset/Programs/Helpline.html>

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