

Helpline/Turning Point offering help to quit smoking

The Oklahoma Tobacco Helpline and Carter County Turning Point Tobacco Coalition are offering free quit smoking tips for the new year.

If you are ready to quit tobacco, Sister Carolyn Stoutz, chair of the Tobacco Coalition in Ardmore, says free help is within your reach through the Oklahoma Tobacco Helpline.

Stoutz says, regardless of whether this is a first time to try quitting or you've tried before, the helpline can connect you with a specially trained "quit coach" who can provide non-judgmental support and personalized quit plans based on individual needs.

"Take the opportunity this new year to upgrade your health and quit tobacco for good," Stoutz said. "The health benefits start almost immediately. Within 20 minutes of quitting, your body will already start repairing itself from the harmful effects of tobacco. You'll soon have more energy, more lung capacity, a better sense of taste and more money in your pocket."

Those ready to quit, the Oklahoma Tobacco Helpline and Carter County Turning Point Tobacco Coalition encourage:

- Set a quit date: Pick a date within the next 30 days to quit smoking. Avoid setting a day too far in the future and choose a day where you know you will not be stressed or in a situation that typically triggers a craving.
- Seek support: Quitting is much easier when you have a support system in place. Lean on friends, family, "Quit Coaches" and your doctor to help you throughout your quitting journey.
- Tobacco-proof your life: Remove tobacco products from your home, car and place of work. Get rid of any tobacco paraphernalia including ashtrays and lighters, and avoid situations in which you would be around tobacco products.
- Use nicotine replacement therapies: NRTs are used to decrease withdrawal symptoms triggered when you quit smoking. The Oklahoma Tobacco Helpline offers free nicotine patches, gum or lozenges to eligible participants.
- Practice quitting with mini-quits: Mini-quits involve avoiding smoking a cigarette or dipping just one instance at a time. Plan your mini-quit by changing up your routine, especially avoiding the triggers that make you crave cigarettes the most. Try replacing bad habits with good habits, like going for a walk when you might normally have your morning cigarette.

To connect with professional "Quit Coaches" call (800) QUIT NOW (800) 784-8669 or visit www.OKhelpline.com.

Free patches, gum or lozenges are also available through the helpline. Connecting with the helpline can also be done through social media by liking the Oklahoma Tobacco Helpline on Facebook or following @OKhelpline on Twitter.

The Oklahoma Tobacco Helpline is primarily funded by the Oklahoma Tobacco Settlement Endowment Trust, in partnership with the Oklahoma State Department of Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.