

Mission:

To protect, promote & improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county & community efforts.



Rick Scott
Governor

John H. Armstrong, MD, FACS
State Surgeon General & Secretary

Vision: To be the Healthiest State in the Nation

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Florida Department of Health in Gulf County Has Free Resources to Help You Quit - More than 1.7 Million Floridians Want to Quit Smoking Completely^{1,2,3} -

Port St. Joe, FL – A new year is a new opportunity to set health goals and stick with them. For many, it is a chance to quit tobacco. Fortunately, Gulf County residents don't have to do it alone. The Florida Department of Health in Gulf County and the Tobacco Free Florida program have free, proven-effective resources that can double a tobacco user's chances of quitting.

There are plenty of reasons to quit. In fact, quitting smoking can add up to 10 years to one's life expectancy.⁴ The health benefits of quitting smoking begin almost immediately after one's last cigarette and continue for years if one quits for good.

"The Gulf County Tobacco Prevention Partnership and Students Working Against Tobacco Chapter have been working with community partners to increase cessation awareness", said Marsha Lindeman, Administrator for the Florida Department of Health in Gulf and Franklin Counties. "Most tobacco users have the motivation to quit and our goal is to make sure cessation resources remain available and easily accessible."

Quitting tobacco may be difficult, but it is not impossible. There are more former smokers than current smokers in the state. Those who have tried to quit in the past but relapsed are encouraged to try again as quitting smoking may require several attempts.^{5,6}

Tobacco Free Florida helps tobacco users create comprehensive and personalized quit plans, which increase the chance of success. Free nicotine replacement therapy (NRT), like the patch or a combination of the patch and nicotine gum, is available while supplies last and if medically appropriate.

Tobacco Free Florida offers 3 Free & Easy Ways to Quit:

- **CALL:** Call the Florida Quitline at 1-877-U-CAN-NOW to speak with a Quit Coach® who will help you assess your addiction and help you create a personalized quit plan.
- **CLICK:** Tobacco Free Florida's online cessation tool can be accessed at tobaccofreeflorida.com/webcoach.
- **COME IN:** Sign up for group classes at your local Area Health Education Center (AHEC) by calling (850) 224-1177 or visiting www.ahectobacco.com

"The number of cigarette smokers in Florida has reached an all-time low,⁷ yet too many residents struggle with tobacco's deadly addiction," said State Surgeon General and Secretary of Health Dr. John Armstrong. "While every person will have a unique path to overcoming tobacco addiction, many can greatly benefit from the state's evidence-based resources that are available free of charge."

ABOUT TOBACCO FREE FLORIDA

Florida Department of Health

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The Department's Tobacco Free Florida campaign is a statewide cessation and prevention campaign funded by Florida's tobacco settlement fund. Tobacco users interested in quitting are encouraged to use one of the state's three ways to quit. Since 2007, more than 126,140 Floridians have successfully quit, using one of these free services. To learn more about Tobacco Free Florida and the state's free quit resources, visit www.tobaccofreeflorida.com or follow the campaign on Facebook at www.facebook.com/TobaccoFreeFlorida or on Twitter at www.twitter.com/tobaccofreefla.

The Department works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts. During 2014, the Department is recognizing 125 years of public health in Florida with educational opportunities and events. Please visit www.FLHealth125.gov for more information.

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¹ 15,524,970 Florida adults: Florida QuickStats. U.S. Census Bureau. U.S. Department of Commerce <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/12000.html>

² 16.8 percent (or 2,608,195) Florida adults smoke were current cigarettes: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System Prevalence and Trends Data, 2013. Atlanta: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health.

³ 68.8 percent (1,794,438) report they want to quit: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Quitting Smoking Among Adults—United States, 2001–2010. Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report 2011;60(44):1513–19

⁴ Jha P, Ramasundarahettige C, Landsman V, Rostron B, Thun M, Anderson RN, McAfee T, Peto R. 21st Century Hazards of Smoking and Benefits of Cessation in the United States. *New England Journal of Medicine*, 2013;368(4):341–50 [accessed 2014 Nov 26].

⁵ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. How Tobacco Smoke Causes Disease: The Biology and Behavioral Basis for Smoking-Attributable Disease: A Report of the Surgeon General. Atlanta: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health, 2010

⁶ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Reducing Tobacco Use: A Report of the Surgeon General. Atlanta: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health, 2000

⁷ Jha P, Ramasundarahettige C, Landsman V, Rostron B, Thun M, Anderson RN, McAfee T, Peto R. 21st Century Hazards of Smoking and Benefits of Cessation in the United States. *New England Journal of Medicine*, 2013;368(4):341–50 [accessed 2014 Nov 26].