

Script-Print Getting Smokers Fired Up to Quit

The Great American Smokeout rolls around every year during the third week of November and it has helped millions of people quit since it started in the early 1970s. The idea is not necessarily to make people stop cold turkey on that day, but rather to have tobacco users begin to think about quitting or to make it their quit day.

It's important because according to the American Cancer Society, smoking causes more than 480,000 deaths every year, or about 1 in 5 deaths. And more than 16 million Americans live with a smoking-related disease. In Illinois, 15.8 percent of people smoke which is a 24 percent drop from five years ago.

Dr. Andy Peterson, an OSF HealthCare doctor based in Kewanee, IL is a strong supporter of the Great American Smokeout which will be **Thursday, November 15**. He says the stop smoking campaign can work for casual smokers and for the long-time users who are already seeing health effects.

For those who are trying to quit, Dr. Peterson reminds those in their lives to be supportive.

"If they're having a rough day, don't talk down to them, don't talk back to them. Try to be as supportive as possible and understand. And, if you yourself are a smoker, try to keep that away from them because a big reason for lack of success in quitting smoking is a lot of people who are smokers tend to hang out with other smokers and that trigger being around them all the time is difficult," he advised.

For someone trying to quit, Dr. Peterson points out everyone quits smoking at their own pace. Don't give up and take it one day at a time.

"Most people fail numerous times before they succeed in quitting smoking so if you fail, if you go back to smoking cigarettes, that's ok. Most people do. Pick another date and try again," he said.

According to research offered by the Illinois Quitline, it can take the average person five to seven times before they quit for good.

So, what is the best approach? Dr. Peterson says those who quit cold turkey are slightly more successful than those who gradually wean themselves off nicotine. He says the most success comes by using a two-pronged approach.

He suggested, "Maybe two nicotine replacement therapies (NRTs) like a patch and a gum or medication with a nicotine replacement therapy so a lot of times I just encourage whatever a patient wants to try and go with that approach because usually the patient does know best."

[Here are some good guidelines](#) for what kind of nicotine replacement therapy you might want to try to address the physical addiction. Along with counseling, the Illinois Tobacco Quitline offers up to six weeks of free nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) to enrolled clients who qualify.

As for using e-cigarettes to quit smoking, Dr. Peterson says there isn't enough research to know the long-term, potential harmful impact. He also points out the Federal Food and Drug Administration hasn't approved the devices as a smoking cessation tool because of the lack of research connected with their use.

[Here is the American Cancer Society's statement](#) about e-cigarette use by smokers trying to quit.

Other Quit Smoking Tips from Dr. Andy Peterson

- **Pick a quit date, throw away your cigarettes and stick to it.** “Don’t pick a day that’s going to be right before a big work project is due or some other stressful time in your life. Try to pick a time that is a boring day where nothing else is going on in your life so you can really focus on quitting.”
- **Pick a substitute for the routines you had that involved smoking.** “Try to find something else to take up your time and occupy your fingers and your mouth. Find a piece of gum, a piece of candy, toothpicks, whatever that might be. Find a substitute.”
- **Find a buddy who also wants to quit.** “So you can hold each other accountable. You can share your successes, share your failures and help get each other through the process because it is not easy.”
- **Get counseling.** “If you have those services available, certainly seek that out because a lot of visualization type strategies (offered through counseling) things like that can be effective.”

The Illinois Tobacco Quitline is **1-866-QUIT-YES** Monday - Friday, 7am - 9pm CST, Saturday & Sunday, 9am - 5pm. It can offer a variety of support and helpful tools.

Are you ready to quit smoking? [Take this quiz.](#)

[Here’s a cost calculator](#) to figure out how much money you can save by quitting.

[Find an OSF HealthCare behavioral therapist or doctor](#) who can help you quit smoking or end smokeless tobacco use.