

Great American Smokeout: Help is Available – interview transcripts

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Dr. Timir Baman, OSF HealthCare Cardiologist

“Smoking is the number one preventable risk factor for cardiovascular disease that we know of. For years and decades people smoked, and we saw that the rate of heart attacks went up. However, over the past few decades we’ve actually had success in decreasing smoking rates. Unfortunately, we are once again seeing an increase in smoking rates, especially in younger people, so I think that message that smoking is bad is still out there, but may not be as prevalent as it was.” (:23)

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“Smoking damages the lungs and we know COVID damages the lungs as well. So if your lungs aren’t 100%, the chances of you having a more significant reaction to COVID is higher, the chances of you going on a ventilator is higher. All of these things add up.”

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“For people who are on the fence, who know smoking is bad, they’ve been doing it, they’ve tried a little bit, this may give people a little motivation to try again. Often times it takes four, five, six, seven, eight times. And it’s fine. As long as you get to the end destination of quitting smoking, it doesn’t matter how many times it takes to get you there.”

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“E-cigarettes, that’s not the answer. There are chemicals in those e-cigarettes. We don’t even know what those chemicals are doing to people. There are numerous reports of having reactions to the chemicals, younger people going on ventilators. So people who think, ‘Oh I’ll just use e-cigarettes, that’s my way out of this,’ you may be in as much trouble or more trouble down the road. We just don’t know at this point.”