

Health Awareness

A County Health Pool Publication



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What is the #2 New Year's Resolution?

Quitting smoking is the #2 New Year's Resolution among Americans. But did you know that only an estimated 15% of people who try to quit smoking are able to break the habit for longer than six months? If you are a smoker trying to quit, that fact is more than deflating. Right now, you might be reaching for your lighter, thinking, why bother?

Here's why you should bother:

Effective immediately, as part of the County Health Pool ASO (Administrative Services Only) agreement with Anthem, a smoking cessation program called Colorado QuitLine will be covered at 100% for all County Health Pool members and their dependents.

Major Shift in Cigarette Packaging and Ads

Some of you may be aware of graphic cigarette packaging and advertisements in other countries like Canada and France. Similar ads of a graphic and impactful nature will soon be hitting the market here in the U.S. In the near future, the FDA will begin requiring larger, more prominent cigarette health warnings on all packaging and advertisements. This new legal requirement represents the most major



shift in cigarette warnings in more than 25 years. The new legislation is being hailed as an important advancement in communicating the dangers of smoking to consumers. The effective date of the change has not yet been determined pending the outcome of the ongoing case of R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Co. v. U.S. Food and Drug Administration, No. 11-1482 (D.D.C.), on appeal, No. 11-5332 (D.C. Cir.).

Why Quit Smoking?

The number one reason to quit smoking is for your health and longevity. Live longer, decrease your risk for stroke and coronary heart disease, and prevent cancer. A smoker's risk of cancer is two to 10 times greater than that of a nonsmoker. The types of cancer extend far beyond the lungs: mouth, nose, sinuses, voice box, throat, esophagus, bladder, kidney, pancreas, ovaries, cervix, stomach and colon. A whopping 90% of lung cancer is a result of smoking cigarettes.

Deadly Facts

Here are a couple of startling numbers to keep in mind if you are a smoker. Did you know that a female smoker will lose 14.5 years of her life due to smoking? Likewise, a male smoker will lose 13.2 years of his life due to smoking. Smokers are up to six times more likely to suffer a heart attack than nonsmokers. Smoking takes more than 440,000 lives each year – more lives than AIDS, drugs and alcohol abuse, homicide, suicide and vehicular accidents combined.



(Over)

What is the #2 New Year's Resolution? (Continued)

Hidden Costs

Another reason to quit smoking is to save money. One pack a day is about \$7.00 which totals \$2,555 per year in disposable income. What would you do with \$2,555 if you weren't spending it on cigarettes?

To see how much money you would save by breaking the habit, check out the "Smoking Calculator" at https://colorado.quitlogix.org/thinking_about_quitting/calculator.aspx.

On a related financial note, did you know that your home's resale value is affected by your smoking habit? That's right. You may receive lower offers when you sell your home, or your smoky smell may even be a deal-breaker for some buyers. Eliminating smoke odors from the home is possible, but at a price, to the tune of \$2,000 to prime and paint several interior rooms, and \$2,800 to deodorize and replace 1,000-square feet of carpet. Likewise, if you smoke cigarettes in your car, you will be penalized when you sell or trade in your vehicle – as much as \$1,000 or more. You may also be dinged for burn holes

and nicotine stains in the interior carpet and upholstery. Being a smoker, you may also experience higher rates and premiums for your automobile, homeowner and health insurance policies. In fact, some companies have imposed heftier health and life insurance premiums and rates for policies covering smokers. And you are not off the hook if you are a nonsmoker because you too are being taxed for smokers' habits. The federal and state governments collect \$630 per American household each year in taxes to pay for smoking-related health problems.

Secondhand Smoke

Another reason to quit smoking is not about you. It's about other people. Protect your loved ones – and even your unloved ones - from the dangers of secondhand smoke. According to the Colorado Department of Health, "nonsmokers who breathe secondhand smoke are more likely to develop certain cancers, heart disease, lung problems and get colds or the flu more often."

Smokers in the County Health Pool

It is estimated that approximately 21% of U.S. adults smoke cigarettes on a regular basis. How does that number translate to the County Health Pool? The Pool has approximately 4,100 employees, of which 861 are smokers, not including spouses or adult children who are covered as dependents.

Enroll in QuitLine Today

If you are one of those 861 members who is a smoker, change your life today by enrolling in QuitLine. Again, it is a FREE benefit at no cost to you. Anthem and the County Health Pool will cover 100% of your cost. Please contact your designated County Health Pool Benefits Administrator or Anthem Customer Service for more information. Good luck!

Source: www.colorado.quitlogix.org



Benefits Corner

What is Colorado QuitLine?

Colorado QuitLine is a smoking cessation program supported by the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment. This life-changing program helps people become tobacco-free, offering resources such as patches, gum, and telephone counseling. Because you are a County Health Pool member, you and your dependents have access to QuitLine at no cost to you. Quit smoking for FREE. If you have tried to quit and failed, or have thought about or never thought about quitting, please consider using QuitLine to quit smoking.