

# Resolve to be Tobacco-Free in 2009

By: Cathy Annas, Tobacco Use Prevention Coordinator

A new year has arrived and with it brings New Year's resolutions. Some desire to quit a habit and make positive, healthy lifestyle changes. Popular resolutions include weight loss, exercise, drinking less alcohol, reducing stress, and quitting smoking. For those resolving to quit tobacco use, there are tremendous benefits. According to the American Lung Association within minutes of smoking the last cigarette the body begins a series of changes.

At 20 minutes after quitting:

- blood pressure decreases
- pulse rate drops

- body temperature of hands and feet increases

At 8 hours:

- carbon monoxide level in blood drops to normal
- oxygen level in blood increases to normal

At 24 hours:

- chance of a heart attack decreases

At 48 hours:

- nerve endings start regrowing
- ability to smell and taste is enhanced

**The first year after quitting:**

At 2 weeks to 3 months:

- circulation improves
- walking becomes easier
- lung function increases

1 to 9 months:

- coughing, sinus congestion, fatigue, shortness of breath decreases

1 year:

- excess risk of coronary heart disease is decreased to half that of a smoker

The following are testimonies from former tobacco users.

Lynne: I started smoking at age 13 because it was the thing everyone was doing. My son wanted me to quit after seeing Slim Goodbody at the Walker Center, when he was seven years old. He came home and said, "Mommy, I don't want you to die, please stop smoking." I replied, "Easier said than done." He said, "God will help," and he started praying right there at the table. I have not put another cigarette in my mouth since that day. How could I?

Cynthia: (What motivated you to quit?) My health and the cost of tobacco was on the rise. I ran out of smokes and decided it was time to quit cold turkey. It was not easy. (Now) I feel really good. Smoke still bothers me in restaurants, but I have compassion for those who smoke, knowing how hard it

is to quit.

Rebecca: I have more energy. I smell better. Most of all my children's health have improved, less colds and infections.

Adam: I started dipping at 14. My dentist told me to quit dipping. He said I had a precancerous lesion. I dipped on the same side and the dentist found a lesion on my gum. I would wake up in the middle of the night craving a dip. (Now) I feel great. After I stopped the lesion cleared up.

Telephone counseling can assist individuals trying to quit and increase their chances of not relapsing. A helpful resource for those who want to quit tobacco use is the North Carolina Tobacco Use Quitline. The services are available to all North Carolinians free of charge. Trained Tobacco Quit Coaches can help devise a quit plan and provide support to become tobacco free.

QuitlineNC is available by calling the toll-free number at 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669), 8:00a.m – 3:00a.m./7 days a week. QuitlineNC is sponsored jointly by the North Carolina Health and Wellness Trust Fund and the Tobacco Prevention and Control Branch, North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services.

## NORTH CAROLINA TOBACCO USE QUITLINE



QuitlineNC.com

1-800-QUIT-NOW

NORTH CAROLINA  
Health  Wellness  
TRUST FUND



- Trained Tobacco Cessation Coaches-English & Spanish
- Coaches can call back upon request
- Toll-free number 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669)
- TTY 1-877-777-6534
- 8 A.M.-midnight/7 days a week
- For all North Carolinians- youth and adult