

# Native American Health Messenger

Your Wellness Connection  
Phoenix Indian Medical Center

November 2004

## Great American Smokeout

Smoking cessation is the single most important step that smokers can take to enhance the length and quality of their lives. Quitting smoking is not easy, but it can be done. To have the best chance of quitting successfully, you need to know what you (or your loved one) are up against, what your choices are, and where to go for help. This issue of the *Native American Health Messenger* will give you some of the information you need to be successful.

**Why is it so hard to quit smoking?** The answer is nicotine. Nicotine is a drug found naturally in tobacco. It is highly addictive, as addictive as heroin and cocaine. Over time, the body becomes physically and psychologically dependent on nicotine. Studies have shown that smokers must overcome both of these to be successful at quitting and staying quit.

When smoke is inhaled, nicotine is carried deep into the lungs, where it is picked up quickly by the blood and carried throughout the body. Nicotine affects many parts of the body, including your heart and blood vessels, your hormonal system, your metabolism, and your brain. Nicotine can be found in breast milk and in cervix (entrance to the uterus or womb) mucous secretions of smokers. During pregnancy, nicotine enters the unborn child.



Nicotine produces pleasurable feelings that make the smoker want to smoke more. It also acts as a depressant by interfering with the flow of information between nerve cells. As the nervous system adapts to nicotine, smokers tend to increase the number of cigarettes they smoke, and therefore the amount of nicotine in their blood. After a while, the smoker needs more and more nicotine to feel as good as before, and increases the number of cigarettes smoked.

**Nicotine withdrawal.** When smokers try to cut back or quit, the absence of nicotine leads to withdrawal symptoms. Withdrawal is both physical and psychological. Physically, the body is reacting to the absence of nicotine. Psychologically, the smoker is faced with giving up a habit, which means a huge change in behavior. Both must be dealt with if quitting is to be successful.

Withdrawal symptoms can include any of the following: depression, feelings of frustration and anger, irritability, trouble sleeping, trouble concentrating, restlessness, headache, tiredness, and/or increased appetite. These uncomfortable feelings lead the smoker to start smoking again. Withdrawal symptoms usually start within a few hours of the last cigarette and can last for a few days to several weeks.

### What can I do on the day I quit smoking?

*Before* you quit smoking, have your detailed plan worked out. Are you going to use a nicotine replacement? Will you join a class? What about joining a Nicotine Anonymous group? Do you want to learn more about how to quit smoking? If yes to any of these questions, then take care of these things *before* your quit day!

*On your quit day*, do not smoke. Get rid of all cigarettes, lighters, ash trays, and any other items related to smoking. Keep active (try walking, exercising, or doing other activities or hobbies). Drink lots of water and juices. Begin using nicotine replacement (if that is your choice). Attend stop smoking class or follow a self-help plan. Stay away from situations where the urge to smoke is strong (stay away from bars, bowling alleys, or other places where smokers hang out.) Reduce or avoid alcohol.

Change your habits. Take a different route to work. Take a walk instead of a coffee break. Keep your hands busy (ideas include needlework, woodworking, or playing board games). Use sugarless gum, hard candy, sunflower seeds, or raw vegetables when you feel the urge to put something in your mouth. Breathe deep. When you were smoking, you breathed deeply as you inhaled the smoke. When the urge strikes now, breathe deeply and picture your lungs filling up with fresh, clean air. If you feel that you are about to light up, *delay*. Tell yourself you must wait at least ten minutes; do something else meanwhile.

### Flu Shots at PIMC

Flu shots will be available at Primary Care Clinic for people considered high risk. Appointments are required; call 602-263-1501. High risk persons include the following: all children aged 6 to 23 months, adults aged 65 years and older, persons aged 2 to 64 with underlying chronic medical conditions, all women who will be pregnant during flu season, residents of nursing homes and long-term care facilities, children 6 months to 18 years of age on chronic aspirin therapy, health care workers with direct patient contact, and out-of-home care givers and household contacts of children less than 6 months of age.

Flu shots will be given on a first-come/first-served basis. If you are in a high risk group, make your appointment now!

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The *Native American Health Messenger* is published monthly by the Phoenix Indian Medical Center Office of Planning. Please contact Roberta Arthur, Public Relations, at 602-263-1576 or e-mail at [roberta.arthur@mail.ihs.gov](mailto:roberta.arthur@mail.ihs.gov) if you wish to submit articles for publication, suggest topics to be covered in future issues, or for more information about the services, programs, and field initiatives of the hospital. Or, you may write: Phoenix Indian Medical Center, Administration/Planning, 4212 North 16<sup>th</sup> Street, Phoenix, AZ 85016.

### Drinking and the Holidays

Now is the time to make plans for how you can make the holidays safe for you and your family. We expect the holidays to be happy. We feel stress because there are so many things to do to get ready for the holidays. We drink to feel comfortable and be fun at parties. Sometimes we drink to stop the pain we feel at this time of year. Our high expectations and the stresses of the season, combined with alcohol, can increase our chances for car crashes, family and child abuse, and depression.

You can make decisions that will make you and your family safer. You can decide not to drink alcohol or go to parties where they are serving alcohol. You can decide not to go to all the parties you are invited to. You can decide to have a simple holiday by cutting back on the number of presents you give or the amount you spend. Plan now, so this holiday season is safe and relaxed.

### Quit Smoking Resources

#### PIMC Quit Smoking Program

602-640-2882 X110

#### AZ Dept Health Serv Quitline

1-800-556-6222 or [www.ashline.org](http://www.ashline.org)

#### American Cancer Society

1-800-ACS-2345 or [www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org)

#### American Heart Association

1-800-242-1793 or [www.amhrt.org](http://www.amhrt.org)

#### American Lung Association

1-800-586-4872 or [www.lungusa.org](http://www.lungusa.org)

#### National Cancer Institute

1-800-4-CANCER or [www.cancer.gov](http://www.cancer.gov)

#### Nicotine Anonymous (1-877-879-6422)

or [www.nicotine-anonymous.org](http://www.nicotine-anonymous.org)

Meetings at Lambda Phoenix Center, 2622 North 16<sup>th</sup> Street, Phoenix on Wednesdays at 7 pm (12 Step Program)

**Smokefree.gov** [www.smokefree.gov](http://www.smokefree.gov)

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## COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Nov 11. **Veteran's Day Gourd Dance**; 11:00 a.m.; Pueblo Grande Museum, Phoenix. [www.aznard.com](http://www.aznard.com)

Nov 13. **Veteran's Day Traditional Pow Wow**; 10 am to 10 pm; free. Fletcher Library, Arizona State University (West Campus), 47<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Thunderbird Road. Arts and crafts, music, dancing, Fry Bread, Indian Tacos and more

Nov 14-15. **6<sup>th</sup> Annual Navajo Nation Museum Keshmish Festival**; Window Rock, AZ. 928-871-6029.

Nov 17-21. **Orme Dam Victory Days Celebration**, Fort McDowell Rodeo Grounds. [www.ftmcdowell.org](http://www.ftmcdowell.org).

Nov 17. **Great American Smoke Out** on PIMC east patio; 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Booths, information, and help on stopping smoking! Fun run at 6:30 am.

Dec 1. **World AIDS Day**. Activities at PIMC on the east patio from 10 am to 2 pm and at the Heard Museum.

Dec 3. **PIMC Blood Drive**; 8:30 am to 1:00 pm. Call Roberta Arthur to make an appointment to donate (602-263-1576).

Dec 8 & 15. **PIMC Holiday Indian Market**, east patio; 9 am to 4 pm.

Dec 11-12. **28<sup>th</sup> Annual Pueblo Grande Museum Indian Market**. Admission \$7. Steele Indian School Park, 3<sup>rd</sup> Street and Indian School Road, Phoenix. 1-877-705-4408 or [www.pgmarket.org](http://www.pgmarket.org)

Dec 13. **One-Day Book Sale** on PIMC east patio; 9 am to 4:30 pm.

**Talking Circle** in PIMC Conference Rooms A and B. Conducted by Native American Connections every Wednesday evening at 7 pm.

**Breastfeeding classes** at PIMC. For more information about dates and times, call the toll free breastfeeding hotline: 1-877-868-9473.

**Stop Smoking Classes** at PIMC. For more information, call 602-640-2882 X110.

**Sweat Lodge** behind PIMC held on the last Friday of every month at sundown for men, and the last Thursday of every month for women.

## Help to Quit Smoking

There are many services available to help you (or a loved one) quit smoking; many are available at the Phoenix Indian Medical Center.

**Nicotine replacement therapy.** This method gives you a small dose of nicotine to help cut down the urge to use tobacco once you have quit. Nicotine replacement therapy includes nicotine gum, lozenges, the "patch," nasal sprays, and inhalers. By using one of these, a smoker's withdrawal symptoms are lessened. Nicotine replacement therapy should not be used by women who are pregnant or may become pregnant or by people with heart or circulatory diseases.

**Stop smoking programs.** Nicotine replacement therapy only deals with the physical aspects of addiction, so you must also consider ways to change your habits. Stop Smoking Programs provide support to those who want to stop smoking and include a series of classes so you can learn ways to adjust to not smoking. PIMC has a Stop Smoking program; for information, call 602-640-2882 X 110.

**Medications.** Zyban is a prescription antidepressant in an extended release form that reduces the symptoms of nicotine withdrawal. This drug affects chemicals in the brain that are related to nicotine craving. It can be used alone or together with nicotine replacement therapy. This medication should not be taken if you have a history of seizures (convulsions), anorexia, heavy alcohol use, or head trauma (injury to the head).

**Quitlines.** More than 30 states run some type of free telephone "Quitline," which links callers with trained counselors. These specialists help plan a quit method that fits each person's unique pattern of tobacco use. Telephone counseling is more convenient for some people; it doesn't require transportation or child care and it's available nights and weekends. Tobacco users in Arizona can get help from the Arizona Department of Health Services by calling 1-800-556-6222 or by going to [www.ashline.org](http://www.ashline.org) on the Internet.

**Support of family and friends.** Talk with your family, friends, and coworkers about your plan to stop smoking. Tell them how they can help you. Some ideas include taking work breaks with coworkers who don't smoke; asking someone at work to go with you for a walk during your break; asking family members who do smoke to do so outdoors and not around you; and/or asking family members who smoke not to leave cigarettes, lighters or matches, or ashtrays out where you can see them. Try to think of other ways they can help you, and let them know.



## Letter from the Director

The American Cancer Society has scheduled the 26<sup>th</sup> Annual Great American Smokeout for Thursday November 18<sup>th</sup> to encourage smokers to quit for a day in the hope they may quit for good. PIMC will be holding a special event on Wednesday November 17<sup>th</sup> on the east patio from 10 am to 4 pm to support this effort.

The biggest reason people give for wanting to stop smoking is health concerns. Nearly everyone knows that smoking can cause lung cancer, but few people realize it is also a risk factor for many other kinds of cancer as well, including cancer of the mouth, voice box, throat, esophagus, bladder, kidneys, pancreas, liver, cervix, stomach, colon and rectum, and some leukemias.

Smoking also increases the risk of lung diseases such as emphysema and chronic bronchitis. Smokers are twice as likely to die from heart attacks than nonsmokers. And smoking is a major factor for peripheral vascular disease (a narrowing of the blood vessels that carry blood and oxygen to the leg and arm muscles).

Let us help you or a loved one quit smoking. Stop by on Wednesday November 17<sup>th</sup> or talk to your health care provider about ways to stop smoking.

Dr. Meeth, Acting CEO, PIMC

## For Kids Only!

The PIMC Safety Bears want you to know about cigarettes, hoping that you will never try them. There are chemicals in cigarettes that make people addicted. These chemicals act on the brain, making smokers want to smoke more and more. Smokers also get into habits that go along with smoking (for example, *always* lighting up a cigarette when drinking coffee), making it difficult to stop smoking (whenever the person drinks coffee, he/she gets the urge to light up another cigarette).

You should also know that most people who smoke cigarettes started when they were teenagers (or younger). Almost no one who has reached the age of 20 starts smoking. Why is this? Adults don't worry about fitting in; they usually accept who they are and don't need to do things just to be part of the group.

Finishing high school without trying smoking is your best bet! This is not always easy to do. You need to know how to say "No!" when a cigarette is offered to you. Here are some ideas: (1) Say, "My father will kill me if I smoke!" (2) "I'm in a hurry right now; see you later." (3) "I play sports and smoking makes it harder to play well." Talk with your parents, teachers, grandparents, or others you trust to think up more ways to say "No!"



## Deciding to Quit Smoking

The decision to quit smoking is one *only you* can make. Others may want you to quit, but the real desire and commitment must come from you.

Research shows that you will be more likely to stop smoking if you:

- believe that you could get a tobacco-related disease and this worries you.
- believe that you can make an honest attempt at quitting.
- believe that the benefits of quitting are greater than the benefits of continuing to smoke.
- know of someone who has had health problems as a result of their tobacco use.

Planning is a very important step in quitting smoking. You need to pick a quit date and put it on your calendar. Tell friends and family about your quit day. Stock up on things to put in your mouth that are not cigarettes, such as sugarless gum, carrot sticks, and/or hard candy.

Ask yourself if you want to use nicotine replacement therapy? Do you need to see your health care provider to talk about choices or get a prescription? If yes, make the appointment now. Will you go to classes? If yes, sign up now! Plan on how you will deal with cravings. Decide, now, how you will cope with stress after you quit. Physical activity (like walking, bike riding, softball, volley ball) helps reduce stress. Prayer and meditation have been used successfully with other addictions. Arrange to meet with a traditional healer or a member of the clergy for support. Ask for help from family and friends, and tell them how they can help you.