



A CUP OF HEALTH WITH CDC

Quit for Your Family's Sake

Great American Smokeout — November 20, 2008

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[Announcer] This podcast is presented by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. CDC — safer, healthier people.

[Dr. Gaynes] Welcome to *A Cup of Health with CDC*, a weekly feature of the MMWR, the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report. I'm your host, Dr. Robert Gaynes.

Approximately one in five people in the U.S. still smoke, despite its well-known and highly publicized negative health effects, including cancer and heart disease. Each year, almost one half million Americans die from this addiction. There are many effective strategies out there to help someone quit smoking, but most smokers don't use them.

Dr. Terry Pechacek is Associate Director for Science in CDC's Office on Smoking and Health. He's joining us today to discuss smoking and ways to quit. Welcome to the show, Terry.

[Dr. Pechacek] Happy to be here with you, Bob.

[Dr. Gaynes] Terry, is smoking among Americans increasing or decreasing?

[Dr. Pechacek] For the first time ever, less than 20 percent of adults smoke in this country. Unfortunately, smoking rates are declining much slower than they were 10 or 20 years ago.

[Dr. Gaynes] Is smoking more common among any particular groups?

[Dr. Pechacek] Smoking rates are higher among men, particularly younger men, and we continue to see very large disparities across income, education, and higher smoking rates within certain racial and ethnic groups, such as American Indians and Alaskan Natives.

[Dr. Gaynes] What public health strategies can help reach everyone to reduce smoking?

[Dr. Pechacek] Increasing the price of cigarettes and other tobacco products both prevents children from starting to smoke and helps all smokers quit. Banning smoking in public places, including restaurants and bars, also makes it much easier for people to quit smoking.

[Dr. Gaynes] Now, you mentioned banning smoking in public places. That also reduces second-hand smoke. So, of all the deaths we know from smoking, how many are actually related to second-hand smoke?

[Dr. Pechacek] We estimate that about 50,000 deaths each year are among people who are not smokers. In other words, it's coming from the second-hand smoke in public places.

[Dr. Gaynes] So, what do we know about how smokers try and quit?

[Dr. Pechacek] Many people are trying to quit. About 70 percent want to quit and about 40 percent of smokers in this country are trying each year. Unfortunately, most people are trying to quit without the most effective help

[Dr. Gaynes] Terry, what interventions are particularly effective in helping someone quit?

[Dr. Pechacek] Smokers should be aware that there are treatments and services available that can help them quit now, more effectively than ever. Smokers can more than double their likelihood of success in quitting by using the right medications and accessing telephone counseling. To access free counseling from anywhere in the United States, you can call 1-800-QUIT-NOW.

[Dr. Gaynes] Terry, on a sad note, I understand that CDC and the tobacco control community recently lost one of its leading advocates – Dr. Ron Davis. Can you tell us a little about Dr. Davis's contributions?

[Dr. Pechacek] Dr. Davis was a pioneer in changing the priority of prevention in the American Medical Association. Through his teaching and leadership in the field of tobacco prevention and control, he's a beacon of what a difference one person can make.

[Dr. Gaynes] Terry, where can listeners get more information on how to quit smoking?

[Dr. Pechacek] From the CDC website: www.cdc.gov/tobacco.

[Dr. Gaynes] Thanks, Terry. I've been talking with CDC's Dr. Terry Pechacek about smoking. Remember, if you smoke, do whatever you can to quit. You're twice as likely to successfully quit if you get help with counseling and medications.

Until next time, be well. This is Dr. Robert Gaynes for *A Cup of Health with CDC*.

[Announcer] For the most accurate health information, visit www.cdc.gov or call 1-800-CDC-INFO, 24/7.