



The Great American Smoke-Out

What is the Great American Smoke-out?

The Great American Smoke-out is a nationwide event sponsored by the American Cancer Society. Held on the third Thursday of November, it is a day where smokers are asked to put down their cigarettes, cigars, spit tobacco, or any tobacco product and prove to themselves that they really can live without them for one day.

Why do we have it?

According to the U.S. Surgeon General, "cigarette smoking is the major single cause of cancer mortality in the United States." In Michigan, cigarette smoking and secondhand smoke are the two leading causes of preventable death. In Berrien County, 26% of the population are smokers, which is above the national average. "If we can get people to stop smoking just for one day, then hopefully they will have a chance to see that it really is worth a try to remain

tobacco-free for life", stated Kerri Teachout, Prevention Specialist at Berrien County Health Department.



What does it take to participate?

Just you. There is nothing to join or buy or sign up for. You simply commit to quit for one day. If you are not a smoker but want to be involved, you could help a family member or friend with their commitment or you can be part of the local efforts to advocate smoke free environments.

How you can begin to quit ?

The first step is to make the decision that you want to quit. Know why you are quitting and state an 'end-goal'. Is it to improve health? Save money? Improve your love life?

The next step is to get ready. Prepare for your quit; decide what day you will quit. The Great American Smokeout Day is a perfect time to quit as lots of other people are doing the same thing, plus there is never a better time when you have an entire nation supporting your decision. Did you know that more Americans try to quit smoking on this day than any other day of the year, including New Year's Eve?

Next, decide on a method you will use to help you quit. Will it be cold-turkey, nicotine patches, medication, counseling, smoking cessation classes or some other way? Call the Health Department if you would like help with this.

Health benefits of quitting smoking over time

- 20 minutes after quitting: your heart rate slows and blood pressure lowers
- 12 hours after quitting: the carbon monoxide in your blood drops to normal
- 2 weeks to 3 months after quitting: your circulation improves and your lung function increases
- 1 to 9 months after quitting: coughing and shortness of breath decrease; cilia (tiny hair-like structures that move mucus out of the lungs) regain normal func-

tion in the lungs, increasing the ability to handle mucus, clean the lungs, and reduce the risk of infection.

- 1 year after quitting: the excess risk of coronary heart disease is half that of a smoker's
- 5 years after quitting: your stroke risk is reduced to



that of a non-smoker 5 to 15 years after quitting

- 10 years after quitting: the lung cancer death rate is about half that of a continuing smoker's. The risk of cancer of the mouth, throat, esophagus, bladder, cervix, and pancreas decrease
- 15 years after quitting: the risk of coronary heart disease is that of a non-smoker's.

(American Cancer Society http://www.cancer.org/docroot/subsite/greatamericans/content/When_Smokers_Quit.asp)

Special thanks to Kerri Teachout, Prevention Specialist, for her help with this article!

The Berrien County Health Department has five locations to serve you:

Benton Harbor		Niles		Three Oaks
769 Pipestone	M-139 Office	School Based	1205 N. Front St.	21 N. Elm
P.O. Box 706	2106 S. M-139	870 Colfax Ave	684-2800	756-2008
926-7121	927-5623	925-4500		

Or visit us on the web at www.bchdmi.org

Berrien County Health Department:

Preventing Disease, Prolonging Life and Protecting the Health of the



November is Breathe Easy Month!

Take a deep breath! For some this is not as easy as it sounds. This month the Berrien County Health Department will bring you information about lung diseases, home breathing hazards, the hazards of smoking and ways to quit, and the Berrien County smoking regulation. For questions about any of these topics, please call the health department at 926-7121.

How to stay smoke-free after you quit:

- Limit time with other smokers, especially in early stages of quitting.
- Get rid of all your cigarettes, lighters and ashtrays.
- Stay out of the places where you commonly purchased cigarettes.
- When the craving to smoke hits, distract yourself—take a deep breath, drink some water, go for a short walk or call a friend instead
- Exercise. It not only relieves stress but will also begin to improve your overall health.
- Plan rewards for yourself. Kicking the habit of smoking IS a big deal and anyone who does it deserves a big reward. The money you save by not smoking could help you do something nice for yourself!

We're here to help!

The Berrien County Health Department has a variety of cessation resources available for you to get started or even to help someone you love get started on the journey of living tobacco free. Smoking Cessation classes are also available and are taught by Certified American Lung Association facilitators. For more information, call the Berrien County Health Department at:

927-5622

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