

May 28, 2014

Kick the habit this World No Tobacco Day

Experts at the South Western Sydney Local Health District are encouraging the 16.3 per cent of people who smoke in south western Sydney to take advantage of World No Tobacco Day on Friday 31 May 2014 and stub out their cigarette butts for good.

World No Tobacco Day is an annual initiative of the World Health Organisation (WHO) which aims to protect present and future generations from the health consequences of tobacco, as well as the social, environmental and economic impacts of tobacco use and exposure to tobacco smoke.

South Western Sydney Local Health District's Acting Director of Health Promotion, Mandy Williams, said tobacco smoking is the greatest single cause of preventable disease and death in NSW.

"If you have tried quitting before but returned to smoking, you are not alone," Ms Williams said.

"Many smokers find it difficult to quit smoking.

"However, research shows the more quit attempts you make, the greater your chance of quitting for good.

"Research has also shown that using nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) with smoking cessation counselling, such as Quitline, doubles the chance of quitting.

"It's never too late to quit - the physical benefits begin as early as 30 minutes."

Some of the benefits of quitting smoking include:

- Within six hours, your heart rate slows and blood pressure decreases.
- Within a day, the level of carbon monoxide in your blood has dropped and oxygen can more easily reach your heart and muscles.
- Within a week, your sense of smell and taste may improve.
- Within six months, your lungs are working much better, producing less phlegm.
- Within 2-5 years, there is a large drop in your risk of heart attack and stroke and this risk will continue to gradually decrease over time.

There are a range of options available to help smokers quit:

- Use NRT such as patches and gum to help ease withdrawal symptoms. Talk to your General Practitioner about subsidised nicotine patches that are now available

on prescription at affordable prices under the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme. A 12-week supply of patches is available at the subsidised price once in any 12-month period, in the form of an initial script for 28 days and two repeats.

- Talk to your General Practitioner or pharmacist about prescription only medications that are available.
- Talk to a specially trained counsellor at the Quitline who can provide advice and discuss what you can expect during your quit attempt. You can contact the Quitline on 13 7848 (you can also request to speak to an Aboriginal advisers). You can also contact multicultural Quitlines: Arabic 1300 7848 03, Chinese 1300 7848 36, Greek 1300 7848 59, Italian 1300 7848 61 and Vietnamese 1300 7848 65.
- You can also visit the Quit website www.icanquit.com.au which provides up-to-date information and personalised quitting advice