

20 May 2015

Prepare to quit on World No Tobacco Day

With new outdoor dining smoking bans starting across NSW in July, World No Tobacco Day (31 May) could be the perfect opportunity to start thinking about quitting for good.

New laws under the *Smoke-free Environment Act 2000* come into effect on July 6 2015 when smoking will not be permitted in commercial outdoor dining areas, including:

- A seated outdoor dining area;
- Within four metres of an outdoor seated dining area on a licensed premises, a restaurant or café;
- Within 10 metres of a food fair stall.

Mandy Williams, South Western Sydney Local Health District (SWSLHD) Health Promotion Service Director said the best thing smokers can do for their health is to quit, regardless of how old they are or how long they have been smoking for.

“More than 22 per cent of men and almost 14 per cent of women living in south western Sydney are smokers,” Ms Williams said.

The overall smoking rate in south west Sydney is 17.7 per cent, higher than the NSW prevalence of 16.5 per cent.

Ms Williams said though many smokers have a strong desire to quit, it is normal for some people to make several attempts before they quit for good.

“Some people will choose to go cold turkey (with no support) but if this is not for you then you may want to consider Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT) which may also double your chance of quitting,” she said.

Since 2013, the cost of cigarettes has increased annually by 12.5 per cent each year and the next tax increase is due in September 2015. This means smoking will continue to have an impact on smoker’s health and wallets. A pack a day smoker could save approximately \$7000 in one year by quitting smoking.

There are a number of things you can do when preparing to quit smoking:

- Use NRT such as patches, gum or inhaler 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.
- Talk to your General Practitioner or pharmacist about prescription only medications that are available to help you quit.
- 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 adviser). 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.

- Visit the Quit website www.icanquit.com.au which provides up-to-date information and personalised quitting advice.

During the week preceding World No Tobacco Day, information stalls will be set up at Bankstown, Camden, Campbelltown, Fairfield and Liverpool Hospitals.

World No Tobacco Day is an annual initiative of the World Health Organization (WHO) which aims to contribute to protecting present and future generations from the health consequences of tobacco and also against the social, environmental and economic impacts of tobacco use and exposure to tobacco smoke.

For more information on smoke free laws, visit <http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/tobacco>