

31 March 2016

## Quit the smokes on World No Tobacco Day!

May 31 is World No Tobacco Day and it is a perfect time for smokers to make a quit attempt!

An annual initiative of the World Health Organization (WHO), World No Tobacco Day aims to protect present and future generations from the social, environmental and economic impacts of tobacco use and exposure to tobacco smoke.

Tobacco smoking is a leading cause of preventable ill health and death in Australia. Smoking is a major risk factor for coronary heart disease, stroke, many cancers and a variety of other diseases and conditions.

Mandy Williams, South Western Sydney Local Health District (SWSLHD) Director Health Promotion Service highlighted how quitting can benefit your health.

“Many smokers know that smoking damages their health, but they mightn’t realise they start to reap the benefits of quitting within minutes of their last cigarette,” Ms Williams said.

“That list of benefits will continue to grow for many years and using nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) with smoking cessation counselling doubles your chance of quitting.

“If you have made a quit attempt before and were unsuccessful, learn what tripped you up and plan some practical strategies to increase your chances of success,” she said.

Quitting smoking also has increasing financial benefits, as the announcement of a new tobacco excise is set to make cigarettes more expensive.

Ms Williams also identified the emotional hardship that often results from smoking.

“Two out of three smokers will die prematurely as a result of smoking. Quitting is your best chance to avoid becoming a statistic,” she said.

There are a number of things you can do to increase your success in a quit attempt.

These include;

- Use Nicotine Replacement Therapy such as patches, gum or inhaler to help ease withdrawal symptoms. Subsidised nicotine patches are available on prescription, just ask your General Practitioner (GP).
- Talk to your GP about prescription only medications
- Ring the Quitline on 13 7848. It offers a free (small fee from mobiles) confidential service with fully trained counsellors. Arabic, Chinese, Vietnamese and Aboriginal Quitline counsellors are also available.
- Visit the Quit website [www.icanquit.com.au](http://www.icanquit.com.au) which provides up-to-date information and personalised quitting advice

- If you are experiencing cravings you can have a glass of water, go for a walk or do something to distract yourself until intense cravings stop.
- Try to halve your caffeine intake.
- Establish a healthy routine including exercising regularly and eating a healthy diet. The Get Healthy Information and Coaching Service is a **free, confidential** telephone-based service for people over the age of 16 years who want advice and support to lose weight, improve their diet or be more physically active. Getting started is easy, simply phone 1300 806 258, register online [www.gethealthynsw.com](http://www.gethealthynsw.com).