

Want Some Life Saving Advice?

Ask Your Dental Hygienist About Tobacco Quitlines

Most people who smoke would like to quit, but do not know how. Tobacco quitlines, first implemented in the late 1980s, are free, telephone-based services that many states provide for their residents. Research has shown that quitlines can be very effective, in increasing the percentage of smokers who attempt to quit and reducing relapse rates.

In addition quitlines are

- convenient
- cost-effective
- free
- confidential
- flexible in hours of operation.

There is no need to travel to a counseling center or schedule childcare—and, in some cases, there is a choice of language.

Quitlines can offer a wide variety of resources to those who wish to stop smoking such as mailed information, referrals to other resources, and counseling over the phone. Some quitlines have counselors who call the smoker on a scheduled basis to follow up on a quit attempt and provide reinforcement to prevent relapse.

Information about and/or help obtaining nicotine replacement/bupropion (Zyban) may be available through some states' quitlines. Some offer Internet chat support. In addition to help for the general public, many provide services for specific groups of people such as pregnant smokers, smokeless tobacco users, adolescent smokers and Medicare recipients. While most quitline callers are smokers who want to quit, quitlines can also provide services for those who are not yet ready to quit, xsmokers who need support, and concerned family and friends of smokers.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has implemented a nationwide toll-free telephone number 1 800 QUIT NOW (784 8669) as a portal for all citizens to access quitlines in their home states. Many states without quitlines will be working to establish them.

Your dental hygienist is another good source of information about smoking and its effects on your oral and overall health. And for more information about proper oral health care, as well as brushing-and-flossing instructions, please ask your registered dental hygienist, and/or visit the ADHA Web site at www.adha.org.

What happens when you call a quitline?

Counselors trained to handle quitline calls can answer questions about the cessation process, help plan a strategy for quitting, and provide motivation throughout the process. They can warn about the kinds of situations that are known to trigger a relapse, and equip you with tools for resistance. They can provide information and referrals for special physical or mental health conditions. When you call a quitline, depending on your state you may...

- speak immediately with a counselor
- hear a taped educational message and then be offered the option to hold for a dispatcher who will have a counselor call you back
- be asked to choose printed materials, taped information, or live counseling
- speak with a screener who either takes your order for materials to be mailed or arranges for proactive telecounseling callbacks.

To help ensure the success of the quitline, you also may be asked some basic information such as your age, ethnicity, and education; and what kind of, and how much, tobacco you use. This information will be kept confidential.