Quit Line Can Help Smokers Kick the Habit

Many people use the beginning of the new year to make positive changes in their lives. Some people will make resolutions to lose weight, get in shape, save money or quit smoking.

If your New Year’s resolution is to remove tobacco from your life, Kentucky’s Tobacco Quit Line, 1-800-QUIT NOW (1-800-784-8669) can help you reach that goal.

“The nicotine in tobacco is one of the most powerful addicting chemicals,” explains Jan Beauchamp, coordinator for Kentucky’s Tobacco Quit Line. “While many people will want to quit, without support, medication or counseling as few as 5 percent will be successful. The Quit Line has helped many Kentuckians break their addiction to nicotine.”

Kentucky’s Tobacco Quit Line is a statewide telephone service providing free counseling and support for people who want to stop smoking or using other tobacco products. Highly trained cessation specialists answer calls from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday through Friday helping smokers develop a quit plan.

“Our hope is that people will think about the effects tobacco is having on their health and give some serious consideration to quitting,” said Beauchamp. “The first of the year is a great opportunity to stop smoking, start living a healthier lifestyle and create a healthier environment in your home.”

The Quit Line offers individual counseling for tobacco users who are ready to quit. After the initial call, smokers may receive up to five scheduled callbacks from their counselor. For smokers considering quitting, the Quit Line staff will provide information about tobacco use and treatment options.

Quit Line services are available in English and Spanish. TDY/TDD is available at (800) 969-1393. Counseling and materials are provided at no charge to callers.

Visit http://chfs.ky.gov/dph/ach/cd/tobacco.htm for information on other tobacco cessation options.

Blood Drives Move to Fixed Location

Starting this month, blood drives will be held in the Department for Public Health Training Room C. Blood drives will take place the third Friday of each month from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. The Central Kentucky Blood Center (CKBC) will take blood during odd numbered months. The American Red Cross (ARC) will take blood during even numbered months. All registrations will be made online. Donors must have prior approval from their supervisor before donating. The CKBC and ARC recommend donors wait a minimum of 56 days between blood donations. In addition, donors may only receive blood donation leave time once every 56 days. For more information, visit
http://chfsnet.ky.gov/os/ohrm/pph/5.4_Blood_Donation_Leave.htm. The 2009 blood drive dates are listed below.

Central Kentucky Blood Center
Jan. 16
March 20
May 15
July 17
Sept. 18
Nov. 20

American Red Cross
Feb. 20
April 17
June 19
Aug. 21
Oct. 16
Dec. 8

Winter Weather and Your Health

From the National Institutes of Health

Bright blue skies, blankets of snow, crisp days and cozy nights by a crackling fire. For many people, winter is a welcome time of year. But for people with certain diseases like arthritis, it can be a pain—literally. While cold weather doesn’t cause arthritis or most other conditions that get worse when temperatures drop, it can cause problems for people who have them. If you have one of these conditions, here’s what you need to know to survive winter’s chill.

“Weather affects different people differently,” Dr. Mark Gourley of NIH says. “Some people actually prefer cold weather, but many people with rheumatoid arthritis or lupus will be stiffer in the morning. It can take them longer to get up and loosen their joints and get going.”

There’s very little research showing that cold weather directly causes arthritis or alters its course. So why does the cold seem to make arthritis feel worse?

As the weather changes, so can the pressure in your joints. If you think of the tissues surrounding the joint as a balloon, Gourley explains, the balloon around the joint will expand a little when air pressure is low. The expanding tissues put pressure on the joint. People can actually feel changes in air pressure in their joints, which is why some people say they can predict the weather by the pain in their joints.

Some suggestions: Sleep under an electric blanket, warm clothing in the dryer before dressing and drink warm or hot drinks, such as coffee, tea or hot chocolate.
It’s also important to keep moving, Gourley says. Try exercising the affected joints before going out in the cold weather. It also helps to maintain a regular exercise program year round. Exercise will not only loosen stiff joints, but will also help prevent winter weight gain that puts more stress on painful joints.

**Capitol Steps Challenge**

In 2009, Virgin HealthMiles, a pedometer program, became available to state employees. Along with tracking your steps on the pedometer, the program also allows participants to take charge of their health by managing their own Live Zone page. This program is designed to give participants access to actively research and track their health and fitness routines and or goals.

Starting on Jan. 1, Texas Gov. Rick Perry challenged all states with an initiative to draw attention to the growing problem of obesity in the U.S. He asked other states’ executive agency leaders to compete in the Capitol Steps Challenge. The designated teams will compete daily for two weeks by tracking daily steps managed by Virgin HealthMiles. The winning team will receive a $50,000 donation to the state’s childhood obesity program.

The winning team can also choose to enter the second phase of the Virgin HealthMiles obesity initiative, which increases the potential donation to $250,000. The challenge attracted 14 states including: Alabama, Alaska, California, Florida, Idaho, Indiana, Kentucky, North Dakota, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, West Virginia and Wisconsin.

As of Jan. 5, the state standings were:
Indiana
North Dakota
Idaho
Alabama
Kentucky

The challenge will conclude on Jan. 14, and the winner will be announced on Feb. 21 in Washington, D.C., at the National Governors Association meeting.

Governor Beshear is participating in the challenge and asked some CHFS employees to help. Cheer on the team and watch our state’s progress at [http://www.virginhealthmiles.com/](http://www.virginhealthmiles.com/). Once at the site, be sure to register yourself for the Virgin HealthMiles program by using these links:
[http://www.virginhealthmiles.com/kehpemployees](http://www.virginhealthmiles.com/kehpemployees) (for employees covered under KEHP)
[http://www.virginhealthmiles.com/kehpdependents](http://www.virginhealthmiles.com/kehpdependents) (for adult dependents covered under KEHP)

**Fiscal Workout**
Sometimes, being fiscally smart doesn’t mean you know when to save money. Rather, it might mean you know when to spend it. I believe it’s time to open your wallet whenever you have the chance to make an investment in your future health. Think I’m crazy? Maybe so, but if you’re thinking about dropping some significant change on home gym equipment, a basketball or tennis court or, heck, even a Nintendo Wii, plenty of reasons abound to say yes to that investment.

A few years ago, I decided I’d had enough of running outdoors in the winter. The winds wreaked havoc on my skin and sent my tear ducts into overdrive; I was spending a fortune in gear to keep me warm; and any time the temperature dipped below 50 degrees, a 30-minute jog would leave me coughing for three hours. To be honest, most days I wound up talking myself out of exercise and onto my couch. Determined not to slack off one winter, I started looking into purchasing a treadmill – much to the dismay of many who feared I was only buying a very expensive coat rack. I persevered. After all, I wasn’t purchasing the equipment to start exercising. My goal was to keep exercising. By the following spring, I’d lost five pounds, and my mile time was faster.

Four years later, I still have that treadmill and it hasn’t been used to hang a single coat. Honestly, I think it’s one of the smartest purchases I’ve ever made and I imagine – as long as the engine holds out – I will be using it for years to come. Now, I can’t actually measure in dollars what I have or will save in future health care costs, but I know my cardiovascular fitness has improved. Plus, the treadmill, while expensive, was paid off years ago and I haven’t spent a dime since (save for a workout video or two) on gym memberships or exercise classes.

So, if you’re thinking about buying an expensive piece of equipment – or even upping your grocery bill to make way for healthier foods – fiscal responsibility shouldn’t be your reason for saying no. In the long run, you just might save yourself a bundle.

**Fiscal Money Saving Tip of the Week** – Even when investing in your future health, you can still save money. Home gym equipment can be bought for a steal. Check newspaper classifieds (many items have only been used a handful of times before the owner gets buyer’s remorse) and check Web sites like Craigslist or eBay for used items. You can also check with local gyms, who frequently sale old, but still working equipment, to make way for new items.

**Employee Enrichment**

*By Anya Armes Weber*

Annual performance reviews are an inevitable part of employment for most of us. They can be useful tools in assessing our work performance. They can offer special recognition for exemplary performance, and they can help us target the skills we need to improve. It’s good to get constructive criticism, but what should you do when you get a negative evaluation? Matt Villano, a career writer for the New York Times, offers some suggestions.
Digest the feedback. Give yourself a day to let the bad review sink in. It’s OK to be emotional for a while, then you need to set feelings aside and focus on what you’re going to do.

See it as a gift. This could be an opportunity to really grow professionally. Once you get over your initial reaction, regain your composure and focus on the things you need to do better.

Ask for details. This is not a time to sound accusatory or challenge your manager. You should ask for specific instances of your missteps and the specific actions you can take to improve. Listen to feedback without judging, and it shows you are willing to make things work.

Rebuild your credibility. Establish a checklist that details the steps you will take to improve. Share your short-term achievements with your manager and periodically discuss your progress. Demonstrate your commitment to your long-term success.

If you disagree, you may choose to speak your mind - respectfully. If you object to your evaluation and want to go on record, it can be risky. It’s acceptable to set the record straight and offer the facts, but make sure you’re not just being defensive.