



COUNTY OF BERGEN

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BERGEN COUNTY EXECUTIVE McNERNEY ENCOURAGES SMOKERS TO QUIT IN JULY

BERGEN COUNTY, NJ — Bergen County Executive Dennis McNerney and the Department of Health Services encourage residents who smoke to gain their independence from cigarettes and choose to quit smoking during the month of July.

“Quitting smoking is not easy, but if you really want to, it can be done,” said McNerney. “With the wide array of counseling services, self-help materials and medications designed to reduce nicotine cravings, smokers have more tools than ever before to help them quit successfully.”

To have the best chance of quitting successfully, smokers need to develop strategies to address the powerful three-pronged dependence on smoking: physical dependence on nicotine, a highly addictive drug; psychological dependence to help deal with stress; and habits linking cigarettes to daily routines. Many smokers fail at quitting because they only address one of these dependences.

Here are some strategies to help smokers address their dependence on smoking:

- **Make a list of reasons to quit.** Look at it every time you are tempted to have a cigarette.
- **Identify your smoking triggers.** Keep track of when and why you smoke – keep a record of every cigarette you smoke and what you were doing when you lit up a cigarette. You’ll learn about the things that trigger your need for a cigarette.
- **Talk to your doctor before quitting smoking.** Modern pharmaceutical treatments can make quitting easier.
- **Get support from your family and friends.** Let them know that you are quitting and that you want their help. Their support can increase your success rate by 50%.
- **Make a clean start.** Throw away your cigarettes, hide your ashtrays, and clean the house, your clothes and the car if they smell like smoke. Have your dentist clean your teeth to get rid of smoking stains. Get a haircut or a new outfit—anything to draw a clear line between your life as a smoker and your new life as a nonsmoker.
- **Keep objects around that you can put in your mouth instead of a cigarette.** Items such as carrots, hard candy, sunflower seeds, cinnamon sticks, hard candy, even straws can give you something to do when you really crave a cigarette.
- **Drink a lot of water.** Water will help flush nicotine from your system and reduce the intensity of withdrawal symptoms from the lack of nicotine.

- **Consider nicotine replacement therapy (NRT).** NRT can reduce many of the physical symptoms of cravings. **Nicotine replacement therapy should not be used if you plan to continue to smoke or use another tobacco product. The combined dose of nicotine could be dangerous to your health.**
- **Distract yourself from urges to smoke.** Talk to someone, go for a walk, or get busy with a task.
- **Do something to reduce your stress.** Do deep breathing, take a brisk walk, exercise, take a hot bath, read a book, or plan something enjoyable to do every day.
- **Exercise.** Not only will it make controlling your weight easier, it also gives you more energy and helps keep your mind off smoking. (See your doctor before engaging in a strenuous exercise program.)
- **Change your routines to break your cigarette habits.** Drink tea instead of coffee, use a different route to work, or eat breakfast in a different place. Instead of smoking after meals, get up from the table, brush your teeth or go for a walk.
- **Stay away from things that you connect with smoking.** Avoid activities you associate with smoking such as watching your favorite TV show, sitting in your favorite chair, or having a drink before dinner.
- **Find a smoking cessation program.** For more information on cigarettes and quitting smoking, call the Bergen County Department of Health Services Community Tobacco Program at 201-634-2707 or log on www.bergenhealth.org.

Smokers who have experienced “slips” or “relapses” trying to quit should not get discouraged. Very few smokers are able to quit for good on their first attempt. Most smokers make 8 to 11 attempts to quit before they succeed. The information from each quitting attempt can be used to make a stronger attempt the next time. Quitting smoking is a learning process.

For help in “kicking the habit”, smokers can utilize free quit services provided by the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services Comprehensive Tobacco Control Program. NJ Quitline and Quitnet afford individuals who are ready to quit smoking an opportunity to speak with a counselor or log on from their computer to create a personalized cessation plan. Residents can call NJ Quitline at 1-866-NJ-STOPS or 1-866-657-8677 or log on to NJ Quitnet at www.nj.quitnet.com.

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