



**BERGEN COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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November 17 is the Great American Smokeout™

The Bergen County Department of Health Services, in conjunction with the Bergen County Cancer Coalition, encourages smokers to observe the 36th Great American Smokeout on Thursday, November 17 by developing a plan to quit. Research shows that much of the risk of premature death from smoking could be prevented by quitting. Smokers who quit, regardless of age, live longer than people who continue to smoke.

There are many benefits of quitting smoking and the positive effects could be felt in as little as 20 minutes after your last cigarette:

- 20 minutes after quitting a person's heart rate and blood pressure drop.
- 12 hours after quitting, a person's carbon monoxide levels in their blood drop to normal.
- 2 weeks to 3 months after quitting, a person's circulation improves and lung function increases.
- 1 to 9 months after quitting, a person's coughing and shortness of breath decrease.
- 1 year after quitting, a person's risk of coronary heart disease is half that of a smoker's.
- 5 years after quitting, a person's stroke risk is reduced to that of a nonsmoker.
- 10 years after quitting, a person's lung cancer death rate is about half that of a person who continues smoking. The risk of cancer of the mouth, throat, esophagus, bladder, cervix and pancreas decreases, too.
- 15 years after quitting, a person's risk of coronary heart disease is the same as a nonsmoker's.

Tobacco use remains the single largest preventable cause of disease and premature death in the United States. According to the American Cancer Society, each year smoking accounts for an estimated 443,000 premature deaths and an additional 26,000 to 73,000 nonsmokers dying each year from exposure to secondhand smoke. Tobacco use is responsible for nearly 1 in 5 deaths, attributed to 30% of all cancer deaths and 87% of lung cancer deaths. Smoking kills more people than alcohol, AIDS, car accidents, illegal drugs, murders and suicides COMBINED!

Smokers who would like quitting assistance in the form of free telephone counseling on the Great American Smokeout or other days during the year can contact New Jersey Quitline at 866-NJ-STOPS (866-657-8677) seven days a week. For additional tobacco cessation information, smokers can contact Mom's Quit Connection at their toll-free number of 888-545-5191.

For more information on The Great American Smokeout, visit www.cancer.org. For information on the Bergen County Cancer Coalition, contact the coordinator at 201-634-2707 or visit www.bergenhealth.org.

The Bergen County Cancer Coalition is funded through a grant from the New Jersey Department of Health & Senior Services' Office of Cancer Control and Prevention (OCCP). For more information on Comprehensive Cancer Control in New Jersey, please visit: www.njcancer.gov