

Will you be ready to be a participant in the Annual Great American Smoke Out?

Traditionally, the Great American Smoke Out occurs the third Thursday in November by encouraging smokers to commit to quit for 24 hours. This provides an opportunity for smokers to join as many as 12 million others in being tobacco-free for a day and possibly the rest of their life. According to the American Cancer Society, more smokers try to quit on this day than on any other including New Year's Day.

How will you prepare yourself to be ready? It takes some planning so you may want to start ahead of time to be successful. Here are a few tips:

There is no one right way to quit. Most smokers prefer to quit "cold turkey," that is abruptly and totally. They smoke until their Quit Day and then stop all at once, or they may smoke fewer cigarettes for a week or 2 before their Quit Day. Another way involves cutting down on the number of cigarettes smoked each day. With this method, you gradually reduce the amount of nicotine in your body. You might cut out cigarettes smoked with a cup of coffee, or you might decide to smoke only at certain times of the day. While it sounds logical to cut down in order to quit gradually, in practice this method usually is not effective.

To cope with cravings, practice the 4Ds:

DEEP breaths. Slowly inhale and exhale.

DRINK lots of water throughout the day (especially during a craving).

DO something else to get your mind off the craving. Call a friend, go for a walk, chew on a carrot stick.

DELAY reaching for a cigarette. The urge will pass.

For more information on how to prepare yourself and on quitting visit the American Cancer Society website at www.acs.org or for quit support and resources go to www.QuitPartnerMN.com or call 1800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669).