



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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The Great American Smokeout, Nov. 21
Health district encourages smokers to quit for one day

LAS VEGAS – The Great American Smokeout debuted in 1976 as an opportunity for smokers to give up the habit for just one day with hope the decision would lead to a permanent change. This year, the American Cancer Society has designated Thursday, Nov. 21 as the Great American Smokeout. The Southern Nevada Health District encourages smokers in the community to participate and to commit to a long-term plan to quit for good. For information about tobacco products, secondhand smoke, or to access downloadable No Smoking signs, contact the health district’s Office of Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, (702) 759-1270 or visit www.SNHD.info or www.GetHealthyClarkCounty.org.

Smokers can contact the Nevada Tobacco Users’ Helpline at 1-800-QUIT NOW for free assistance to help them quit smoking. They can speak with a professional, licensed counselor for confidential assistance. With the advent of electronic cigarettes, which also contain nicotine, the Nevada Tobacco Users’ Helpline can also provide help to callers who seek assistance to quit using these products as well. Smokers can also visit the health district’s Get Healthy Clark County website, www.GetHealthyClarkCounty.org to find tips to help them quit smoking as well as additional resources.

Twenty minutes after squashing out a final cigarette, a former smoker reaps the benefits of quitting when the heart rate drops to a normal level. In three months, the risk of a heart attack drops; in one year, the added risk of coronary heart disease is half that of a smoker’s; in five to 15 years, the risk of a stroke is reduced to that of a nonsmoker; and 15 years after quitting, the risk of dying from lung cancer or bladder cancer is reduced to half of smoker’s risk and the risk of coronary heart disease is the same as a nonsmoker’s.

In Clark County, nearly eight of 10 residents are non-smokers. Each year, approximately 2,500 Nevadans under age 18 become daily smokers. About 80 percent of adult smokers became regular smokers before the age of 18. Healthcare costs are about \$565 million for smoking-related illnesses and 3,300 Nevadans die from smoking-related illnesses each year. The average smoker will spend approximately \$1,000 annually on cigarettes.

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Great American Smokeout – add one

The American Lung Association has a program called Not On Tobacco (N-O-T) targeted to teens who want to quit smoking or reduce the number of cigarettes they smoke each day. On a national level, the program has a 21 percent quit rate, higher than any other similar program. Locally, the program was implemented in 2001. Today, the youth smoking rate in Clark County is 8.3 percent; 14 years ago, the rate was 30.7 percent.

The most effective way to quit smoking is to make a plan and get assistance to develop a strategy. Quitting tips include identifying triggers and habits, such as an ‘after dinner’ cigarette, driving, consuming alcohol or coffee.

The American Cancer Society offers several tips to assist:

- Spend time in places where smoking is prohibited, especially the first few days after quitting
- Drink large quantities of water and fruit juice
- Avoid alcohol, coffee, and other beverages associated with smoking
- Eat several small meals to maintain blood sugar levels, avoid sugary or spicy foods that trigger a desire for cigarettes
- Take deep rhythmic breaths to relax
- Join a support group

Get Healthy Clark County, www.GetHealthyClarkCounty.org, also offers information about smoking cessation, injury prevention, and resources for a healthier lifestyle. Updated information about the Southern Nevada Health District can be found on Facebook www.facebook.com/SouthernNevadaHealthDistrict, on YouTube www.youtube.com/SNHealthDistrict or Twitter: www.twitter.com/SNHDinfo. The health district is now available in Spanish on Twitter www.twitter.com/TuSNHD. Don't have a Twitter account? Follow the health district on your phone by texting “follow SNHDinfo” to 40404.