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News Release

For Immediate Release

Tips, Resources for Ending Tobacco Use

As the new year approaches, many of us are thinking about charting a healthier course for our lives in 2012 and beyond. A truly healthy lifestyle doesn't turn on just one decision or action. The types of food we eat, the amount exercise we get and our mental well-being all play a part.

However, one choice can in fact make a significant impact. Quitting tobacco use is one of those choices. Especially at this time of year, smokers and smokeless tobacco users are thinking about quitting the habit. If you are a tobacco user, quitting is likely the single most important step you can take to positively impact your health. Quitting can add years to your life and will boost your quality of life during those years.

Quitting isn't easy. Tobacco users should remember that there are many ways to approach quitting, and each person needs to find the best route for them. Here are a few general tips and resources from the Health Department and the American Lung Association for those looking to break the habit.

- Talk to your doctor or healthcare provider. Healthcare professionals are more than willing to talk to you about quitting, and are familiar with various types of treatments and over-the-counter and prescription medications to help you quit.
- Contact the Springfield-Greene County Health Department for information. Public Health Nurse Karen James, RN, leads the "Freedom From Smoking" program at the Health Department and may be reached at (417) 864-1687. The Health Department offers the seven-week course at regular intervals throughout the year. These classes are offered according to demand, so those who are interested should call to find out more and express interest.
- Take time to plan. Pick your quit date a few weeks ahead of time and mark it on the calendar. If you can, pick a day when life's extra stresses are not at their peak, such as after the holidays. Mark a day on the calendar and stick to it. As your quit day approaches, gather the medications and tools you need and map out how you are going to handle the situations that make you want to smoke.
- Get some exercise. If nothing else, go for regular walks. It's a great way to reduce the stress of quitting. Exercise is proven to not only combat weight gain but also to improve mood and energy levels. Plus, if you're looking to lead a healthier lifestyle in the new year, exercise will be key to that goal.
- Eat a balanced diet, drink lots of water and get plenty of sleep.
- You don't have to quit alone. Help is available online and in your community. Anyone who quits will need support from family, friends and even co-workers.
- More information is available from the American Lung Association at www.lung.org/stop-smoking or by calling 1-800-LUNG-USA (1-800-586-4872). Free

self-help and telephone counseling sessions are available by phone from the Missouri Tobacco Quit Line at 1-800-784-8669.

This year Springfield took a step forward in smoking prevention as voters passed a comprehensive indoor smoking ban in April. Springfield joined other Missouri cities such as Jefferson City, Columbia, Kansas City, and St. Louis in instituting a comprehensive smoking ban. Environmental factors such as this can help those who want to quit or who have considered doing so.

Missouri's smoking and tobacco use rates are among the highest in the nation. According to the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services, the adult statewide smoking rate in 2010 was approximately 21 percent – or about one out of every five people. That puts Missouri in 11th place out of 50 states. The smoking rate among high school students is about 18 percent, and when smokeless tobacco use is included, the use rate among Missouri kids jumps to about 27 percent.

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