

Want Some Life Saving Advice?

Ask Your Dental Hygienist About Tobacco Cessation

Tobacco use is the leading preventable cause of illness and death in the United States, responsible for more than 440,000 premature deaths in 2002. Tobacco use is responsible for at least 30 percent of cancer diagnoses and it is the number one risk factor for heart disease and stroke. Cigarette smoking is the most significant risk factor in the development and progression of periodontal disease. It is a major risk factor for oral and pharyngeal cancer.

The benefits of quitting start immediately – no matter how long or how much a person has smoked.

Immediate health benefits of quitting include:

- Within one year, the risk of coronary heart disease is reduced by 50 percent
- Upon quitting there is an immediate decrease in respiratory symptoms and infections
- Former smokers report fewer days of illness and have fewer health complaints.
- Women who quit before becoming pregnant reduce the risk of low infant birth weights.

Long term health benefits:

- At 5 years stroke and many cancer risks reduces to that of people who have never smoked
- At 10 years the risk of lung cancer drops to one-half that of continuing smokers
- At 15 years the risk of coronary heart disease is now similar to that of people who have never smoked and the risk of death returns to nearly the level of people who have never smoked

There are also benefits to the community and family to consider. Reducing the number of smokers has an additional health benefit of reducing others' exposure to secondhand smoke and its harmful carcinogens. Children of ex-smokers are less likely to start using tobacco. And not smoking costs a lot less money.

By providing you with this fact sheet, your dental hygienist is emphasizing how important it is for you to quit – even if you do not have the desire to do so! For more information on how to quit and about proper oral health care, as well as brushing-and-flossing instructions, please ask your registered dental hygienist and/or visit the ADHA Web site at: www.adha.org.