

# **News Release**

For more information, contact Pam Palm,  
740-507-6533 or ppalm @knoxhealth.com



11660 Upper Gilchrist Rd. Mount Vernon, OH 43050  
PH 740-392-2200 Fax 740-392-9613  
www.knoxhealth.com

**For Immediate Release**  
**Jan. 19, 2016**

## **Help for pregnant women who want to quit smoking**

For more than 10 years, the Knox County Health Department has been helping local residents quit their addiction to tobacco. Now the agency has a special program for expectant moms who want to quit smoking.

Baby & Me – Tobacco Free, is an evidence-based prenatal cessation program that helps women quit smoking and stay quit even after the baby is born. As a reward for quitting smoking, the moms will receive free diapers for their newborn baby for up to 12 months after the baby is born.

Funded by a five-year grant from the Ohio Department of Health’s Children and Family Health Services, the overall goal of the Baby & Me program is to reduce smoking rates among pregnant moms. “Our county tobacco rates among pregnant moms are alarming,” said Mike Whitaker, tobacco treatment specialist with the health department. “In 2013, a total of 45 percent or 193 moms were smokers at the time they delivered their baby.”

Smoking during pregnancy increases the likelihood of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome or SIDS, premature delivery, miscarriage, stillbirth and low birth weight. Women who quit before or during pregnancy can reduce or eliminate these risks. “There is no safe level of smoking for any pregnant mom,” said Whitaker

Any Knox County pregnant mom regardless of income who wants to quit smoking can enroll in Baby & Me – Tobacco Free. Four brief appointments with Whitaker are required before the baby is born. A carbon monoxide reader is used to measure the amount of CO gas in the breath of the participants. Once the mom is smoke-free and remains smoke-free, she is given a \$25 voucher each month for a year to purchase diapers at Wal-Mart.

– MORE –

“The first step for any pregnant mom or any adult who smokes is to make the decision to quit for yourself, not because someone else wants you to quit,” explained Whitaker. “Make a list of reasons why you want to quit and use them as motivation. Quitting smoking is the best thing you can do for the health of you and your baby.”

In addition to Baby & Me – Tobacco Free, the health department continues to offer weekly, ongoing adult cessation classes for Knox County residents. Free counseling, support and nicotine replacement therapy (nicotine patches, gum and/or lozenges) is provided to combat the addiction to tobacco.

The weekly program is held every Thursday, from 7-8:30 p.m. in the health department conference room. No pre-registration is needed. The program is ongoing, so participants can join any Thursday to begin their program.

The ongoing cessation program is funded by an investment from United Way of Knox County.

The health department is located at 11660 Upper Gilchrist Rd., across from the radio station. For more information about Baby & Me – Tobacco Free or the weekly, ongoing adult cessation program, contact Whitaker at the health department at 392-2200, ext. 2233 or via email at [mwhitaker@knoxhealth.com](mailto:mwhitaker@knoxhealth.com).

###