

# **News Release**

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## **Start the New Year off right – Break free of tobacco addiction**

For many Americans, January is the time to make new resolutions that will improve their lives. If your New Year's resolution is to quit using tobacco, the Knox County Health Department can help you 'put it out for good.'

The health department's Knox Out Tobacco program is held twice weekly, offering free counseling and free nicotine replacement therapy to combat with the addiction to tobacco. There's a daytime class held every Tuesday from 10 – 11 a.m. in the private dining room at Knox Community Hospital and there's an evening class held every Thursday from 7-8 p.m. in the conference room at the Knox County Health Department.

There's no pre-registration, participants just need to show up.

"Quitting tobacco is one of the top New Year's resolutions," said Mike Whitaker, a certified tobacco treatment specialist with the health department. "The first step is to make the decision to quit for yourself, not because someone else wants you to quit," explained Whitaker. "We find that people are less successful at quitting when it is someone else's idea. Make a list of reasons on why you want to quit and use them as motivation."

The health department has been providing the free cessation program for nearly 15 years. "We offer a proven treatment plan that has helped about 1,500 Knox County residents quit using tobacco," said Whitaker.

Knox Out Tobacco is funded by an investment from United Way of Knox County through the Public Health Partnership of Knox County. The Ohio Department of Health stopped funding cessation programs several years ago and the Partnership has requested United Way funds to help the health department keep the successful program going.

- MORE -

## Page 2

Knox Out Tobacco provides nicotine replacement patches on a weekly basis. The program is open to Knox County residents who smoke or chew tobacco. It is designed to help participants quit their tobacco use within an eight-week timeframe.

“When you combine the classes and nicotine replacement therapy (NRT), you have a better chance of quitting,” said Whitaker. NRT includes nicotine patches, gum or lozenges. “The classes are more like a support group,” said Whitaker. “We give you techniques to help you quit and make suggestions on how to handle the withdrawals and triggers. Class participants share what works for them and talk about their struggles and successes.”

If you are someone who does not like group sessions, one-on-one counseling is available. On-site sessions for county businesses and agencies are also available.

The Knox County Health Department is located at 11660 Upper Gilchrist Rd., across from the radio station. For more information about the Knox Out Tobacco cessation program, contact Whitaker at the health department at 740-392-2200, ext. 2233 or via email at [mwhitaker@knoxhealth.com](mailto:mwhitaker@knoxhealth.com)

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