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DECREASE HOLIDAY STRESS BY BECOMING TOBACCO-FREE

Tobacco users can practice smoking less in preparation for a successful New Year's resolution; a candy cane may be a perfect substitute

December 16, 2021 – So much to do, so little time. The gift-gathering and celebration preparation can sometimes seem stressful this holiday season, but the joy associated with this time of year can bolster wellness. For those who use tobacco products and loved ones who support their efforts to become tobacco-free, the **New York State Smokers' Quitline** (Quitline) offers three suggestions to consider for self-care in December and beyond.

Practice quit-attempts during the holidays. Most people who use tobacco want to become tobacco-free. Many will make New Year's resolutions in the coming weeks, only to struggle. The Quitline understands how strong nicotine addiction is and wants tobacco users to know if they do slip up, please simply try again. Even one fewer cigarette smoked is beneficial for improved health. Everyone quits differently; however, practice makes perfect.

Consider a candy cane as a substitute for a cigarette. Or drink a glass of water. Or take deep breaths instead of that one extra cigarette. Whatever the technique, focus on learning how to delay and distract. Those who become tobacco-free and make it stick often use mints, stir sticks, or other hand-to-mouth items as a healthy substitute while learning to wean off nicotine. Indeed, that candy cane can be more than just a great decoration this December; it also can be a life-saver! And speaking of saving lives...

Remember the Quitline is free and always available seven days a week for help.

Highly trained Quit Coaches are available by calling 1-866-NY-QUITS (1-866-697-8487) or via electronic chat by visiting nysmokefree.com. The Quitline is so much more than a resource to contact when *it's "time"* to quit. Tobacco users and even their loved ones can connect with the Quitline anytime to ask questions or simply to receive moral support.

For those seeking to become tobacco-free, they will be empowered through the Quitline's Quit Coaches to develop a personalized approach for success by listing triggers and setting a quit-date. Most people also are eligible to receive a free starter supply of nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) via mail, typically in the form of nicotine patches and often with supplemental nicotine gum or nicotine lozenges. When used appropriately and in combination, NRT products can double or triple the odds of becoming and staying tobacco-free.

It's the holiday season: a time to end the year on a positive note. Tobacco users can increase their sense of joy this time of year by practicing cutting down on their cigarette intake, grabbing a candy cane as a substitute, and remembering the New York State Smokers' Quitline is available seven days a week with free help. The Quitline wishes all New York State residents a glorious holiday season and a tobacco-free New Year.

About the New York State Smokers' Quitline

The New York State Smokers' Quitline is a service of the New York State Department of Health and based at Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center in Buffalo, N.Y. It is one of the first and busiest state quitlines in the nation and has responded to nearly 3 million calls since it began operating in 2000. The Quitline encourages nicotine users to talk with their healthcare professionals and access available Medicaid or health insurance benefits for stop-smoking medications. All New York State residents can call **1-866-NY-QUITS** (1-866-697-8487) for coaching and resources, free of charge, seven days a week beginning at 9 a.m. Visit www.nysmokefree.com for more information.

About Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center

Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center is a community united by the drive to eliminate cancer's grip on humanity by unlocking its secrets through personalized approaches and unleashing the healing power of hope. Founded by Dr. Roswell Park in 1898, it is the only National Cancer Institute-designated comprehensive cancer center in Upstate New York. Learn more at www.roswellpark.org, or contact us at 1-800-ROSWELL (1-800-767-9355) or ASKRoswell@roswellpark.org.