Quit Smoking With Help From Washington State Health Department

Local News

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OLYMPIA ¾ Quitting tobacco just got a little cheaper. Washington residents who are ready to quit smoking can now receive at least two weeks of free nicotine patches or gum if they call the state Tobacco Quitline (1-800-QUIT-NOW, 1-877-2NO-FUME) in May or June. People without health insurance can also get eight weeks of nicotine replacement therapy, up from the usual four. Washington state residents on Medicaid are already eligible for a 12 week supply. Along with the free nicotine gum or patch, quitline callers get personalized help from a quit coach, free follow up calls, and a free Quit Kit in the mail. Calling the quitline can double a person’s chances of quitting. More than 160,000 people have called the state quitline since it opened over 10 years ago.

Adult smoking in Washington has dropped by about a third since 2000. Still, tobacco remains a leading cause of preventable disease and death in our state. About 750,000 adults still smoke in Washington and tobacco related illness kills nearly 8,000 people here annually. Tobacco use and secondhand smoke also cause billions of dollars in health care costs. Private and public costs for tobacco-related health care services totaled more than $1.9 billion in 2009. Lost worker time related to tobacco use cost around $1.8 billion.This special nicotine patch and gum offer ends June 30, 2011, or when supplies are gone, so people who are ready to quit should call soon. More information about quitline services (www.quitline.com) is available online.