

## Washington Restores Tobacco Quitline

### Local News

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Adults in Washington who are considering quitting tobacco can now get free help from the Department of Health's toll-free Washington State Tobacco Quitline. Calling a quitline significantly increases a person's chances of kicking the habit. New funding from the Washington State Legislature and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention means the Department of Health can once again provide help quitting to all adult tobacco users in the state. Funding cuts in 2011 eliminated free quitline help for many, including people without health insurance. "Getting our quitline back in business for everyone has been one of my priorities, and I'm thrilled it's happening," said Gov. Chris Gregoire. "For the last year we've been the only state without quitline help for people without insurance. That's unacceptable. The Tobacco Quitline truly is a state service that saves lives and money. We must be there when people need help." Starting immediately, all adults in Washington regardless of insurance status can call the toll-free [Washington State Tobacco Quitline](#) for support to quit using tobacco. The quitline (1-800-QUIT-NOW, 1-877-2NO-FUME in Spanish) provides free counseling, a personal quit plan, a quit kit, and referrals to local resources. Eligible callers can also get a supply of nicotine patches or gum.

"This is great news for the health of people in Washington," said Secretary of Health Mary Selecky. "The best thing a person can do for their health is quit using tobacco, and the quitline makes it easy for anyone to get the help they need. I urge anyone who uses tobacco to call and join thousands of others in kicking their addiction for good." In the past year, more than 6,500 people called the quitline for help but didn't qualify for service. The quitline has a long list of people who asked to be called back if services were restored. "We're pleased to offer support to all Washington residents once again, and look forward to getting back to people who called over the last year but didn't get help," said Ryan Crawford, a Quit Coach supervisor. "Quit coaches help callers identify personal smoking triggers, develop a tailored quit plan, and make decisions about quit medications—support that can double a person's chances of quitting." The benefits of quitting tobacco are immense and immediate. When a person quits, their body starts to respond within 20 minutes as positive health effects begin. Quitting lowers the risk of lung cancer, heart attack, stroke, chronic lung disease, and other cancers. The quitline is a key part of Washington's tobacco prevention and control efforts, which have contributed to a 30 percent drop in adult smoking since 2000. More than 170,000 people have received help from the quitline since it opened for business in 2000. Today, there are many more former smokers in Washington than there are current smokers. The estimated 329,000 fewer smokers in the state represents an overall savings of \$3 billion in future health care costs. Washington has made significant headway in lowering smoking rates, but there's still work to do. Prevention and cessation services have been drastically reduced due to budget cuts, yet the tobacco industry spends more than \$122 million each year to attract new smokers. In Washington, about 50 youth start smoking each day and about 7,900 people die every year from tobacco-related diseases. The [Department of Health website \(www.doh.wa.gov\)](#) is your source for a healthy dose of information. Also, [find us on Facebook](#) and [follow us on Twitter](#).