

★ THE GREAT AMERICAN ★ SMOKEOUT

*An Opportunity to
Promote Tobacco Cessation*

QUIT FOR A DAY. QUIT FOR LIFE.

TIPS AND RESOURCES FOR VA CLINICIANS

WHAT IS THE GREAT AMERICAN SMOKEOUT?

- Each year, the Great American Smokeout is observed on the third Thursday in November. On this day, initiated by the American Cancer Society, smokers are encouraged to quit for one day in the hopes that they will quit for a lifetime.
- Millions of smokers around the country have used the Smokeout as motivation to quit.
- VA is encouraging Veterans to set a goal of quitting during this year's Great American Smokeout. We know what works to help people quit smoking and it is up to us to help Veterans succeed.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO GET INVOLVED WITH THE GREAT AMERICAN SMOKEOUT?

- Despite the significant progress made in reducing the number of Americans who smoke, smoking remains the leading cause of preventable death and disease in the United States.
- The Great American Smokeout provides a unique opportunity to encourage Veterans to join the thousands of others who are saying no to smoking on that day.
- We encourage you to use the day to raise awareness about smoking cessation and the full range of services available in the VA health care system.

WHAT CAN I DO IN MY PRACTICE TO PROMOTE CESSATION DURING THE GREAT AMERICAN SMOKEOUT?

- Help as many Veterans as possible commit to a "smoke-free" day for the Great American Smokeout, and provide them with the tools they need to quit for good.
- From brief counseling to nicotine replacement therapy or other cessation medications, there are numerous effective treatment options to help smokers quit. Use the Great American Smokeout to raise awareness about the effective smoking cessation treatments that are now available.

- Here are some suggestions to promote the Great American Smokeout in your facility:
 - ◆ Use the day to ask every patient you see who smokes, "Do you want help with quitting smoking today?"
 - ◆ Place VA's Great American Smokeout posters, tent cards, and other materials in places where Veterans can see them.
 - ◆ Post a flyer that promotes your facility's smoking cessation clinic.
 - ◆ Organize Smokeout activities for staff. Let them know that they may be able to get coverage for smoking cessation counseling and medications through their insurer. Let them know about free local programs available to help them quit.
 - ◆ Ask your facility employees to sign a pledge to be smoke-free during the Smokeout.
 - ◆ Organize a Grand Rounds or lunch time seminar on effective smoking cessation treatment.

WHAT SHOULD I DO TO HELP MY PATIENTS QUIT USING TOBACCO?

Providing even a brief counseling session of three minutes or less is effective in helping people quit. Use the 5 A's:

ASK about tobacco use at every visit.

ADVISE tobacco users to quit.

ASSESS readiness to quit.

ASSIST tobacco users with a quit plan.

ARRANGE follow-up visits.

For more detailed information, see "Helping Smokers Quit: A Guide for Clinicians."
www.va.gov/vhapublications/ViewPublication.asp?pub_ID=2007

WHERE CAN I FIND THE LATEST CLINICAL PRACTICE GUIDELINES FOR TOBACCO CESSATION TREATMENT?

U.S. Public Health Service Clinical Practice Guideline - Treating Tobacco Use and Dependence: 2008 Update. www.surgeongeneral.gov/tobacco/treating_tobacco_use08.pdf

WHAT OTHER RESOURCES ARE AVAILABLE FOR ME AND MY PATIENTS?

Visit the VA Web site for tobacco cessation tips, tools, and resources.

www.publichealth.va.gov/smoking

vaww.publichealth.va.gov/smoking/index.asp (VA staff only)

