SALUTE TO HEALTH

GEARING UP FOR THE FIGHT AGAINST TOBACCO

Tobacco Free Florida cares about our state's veterans and those who care about them – family, friends, colleagues and caregivers. Salute to Health sets out to educate about the history of tobacco's harmful impact on Florida's veterans and raise awareness of the free resources that can help turn more veteran tobacco quit attempts into victories.

WHERE WE ARE



- Over **1.37 MILLION VETERANS** call Florida home.
- Across the nation, about **1 IN 5 VETERANS (20.9%)** use tobacco products.

FLORIDA IS HOST TO MANY IMPORTANT MILITARY INSTALLATIONS, INCLUDING

U.S. Central Command, U.S. Special Operations Command, and U.S. Southern Command and bases representing every branch of the U.S. military.



HOW WE GOT HERE

- Many service members and veterans begin to smoke under the misconception that smoking reduces stress. The truth is smoking increases stress levels – quitting can lower them.
- The tobacco industry has a long history of reaching military personnel as sources for potential customers. Documentation has established that the military was specifically selected by tobacco companies to promote use of these products through marketing strategies like sponsoring events.
- A study found tobacco companies sponsored more than 1,400 events reaching military personnel between 1981 and 2000.
  - This included a wide variety of events including events at military bases, off-base bars and clubs that served military personnel, and at a series of local concerts.
- Many veterans who smoke were first exposed to the addictive products while in the service. Roughly 37% of military who smoke initiated after enlisting.

WHY IT MATTERS

- Service members who smoke exhibit lower productivity as compared to nonsmoking counterparts, miss more workdays, perform worse on fitness tests, and are more likely to be hospitalized.
- Tobacco use interferes with the effectiveness of many prescription medicines used to treat a wide range of mental health conditions. This can result in patients requiring stronger dosage levels of the medicines, which often have concerns including side effects and potential for addiction.
- When you quit smoking, after two weeks your lung function and circulation begin to improve. Over time your risk of lung cancer drops by half and your risk of coronary heart disease can be almost the same as a nonsmoker's.

- People in Florida who smoke an average of one pack a day spend over **$3,500 A YEAR.**

- **SMOKING CAN WORSEN THE PAIN OF CHRONIC HEALTH CONDITIONS** many military personnel and veterans deal with, including back pain, headaches, rheumatoid arthritis, tooth and gum pain, and fibromyalgia.

- Another popular reason to quit is to be there for family. People who quit:
  - Reduce the risk of exposing their family to secondhand smoke,
  - Have more energy,
  - Reduce the likelihood of their children becoming smokers,
  - Increase the chances of living longer.

WHAT'S NEXT

- **QUITTING IS POSSIBLE.**
  In fact, today, there are more former smokers in Florida than current smokers.

- **TOBACCO FREE FLORIDA'S QUIT YOUR WAY**
  offerings include phone, group, and web services available to Floridians in every county.

PHONE QUIT

GROUP QUIT

WEB QUIT

Quit Your Way programs can provide access to free 2-6 weeks of nicotine replacement therapies (NRT), including nicotine replacement patches, gum, or lozenges to help you quit, if medically appropriate and over 18 years of age.

To learn more, visit:
TobaccoFreeFlorida.com/Veterans

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