



New York State Smokers' Quitline

1-866-NY-QUITS (697-8487) / nysmokefree.com

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- *Smokers will have better odds of quitting with support from both their healthcare provider and the New York State Smokers' Quitline*
- *The Quitline sees its heaviest call volume in January; Quit Coaches are always available seven days a week for support to quit and avoid relapses*
- *Buffalo-area resident achieved success quitting at age 68 and says "it's never too late to quit"*

QUIT SMOKING IN THE NEW YEAR WITH THE NYS SMOKERS' QUITLINE AND A HEALTHCARE PROVIDER

BUFFALO, N.Y. – It's never too late to quit smoking. Just ask Mary M., a 68 year-old resident of West Seneca, N.Y., a suburb adjacent to Buffalo. She smoked for nearly 50 years but is now living a smoke-free life thanks to support from her healthcare provider and the New York State Smokers' Quitline.

The phone lines at the New York State Smokers' Quitline will be exceptionally busy during the month of January, as many try – or try again – to quit smoking as a New Year's resolution. Smoking is one of the hardest addictions to break and unfortunately remains the leading cause of preventable death statewide and nationwide. But by using a support system and medications and then developing healthier routines, New Yorkers looking to quit smoking can achieve success like Mary.

Mary started smoking at age 21 and smoked for more than 45 years, but living with another smoker made quitting difficult. Shortly after her husband passed away in 2015, she was diagnosed with COPD. "I couldn't vacuum my house for more than two minutes without having to take a break to breathe and began to need to wheel around a small oxygen tank at my side," Mary said. "I finally reached the point where smoking just wasn't worth it anymore."

After a recent visit to Windsong Radiology for a lung cancer screening, Mary received a referral to the New York State Smokers' Quitline from Windsong's lung cancer screening navigator, Tracey Supples, RT, RM, CN-BI. Supples advises fellow healthcare providers to

ask their tobacco-using patients about their smoking condition during every visit and to partner with the New York State Smokers' Quitline as a resource to refer their patients for additional help.

"It's common for me to see patients try 10 times or more before they finally kick the habit for good," Supples said. "It's so hard to quit smoking – especially alone. That's one reason why the New York State Smokers' Quitline is so helpful in my efforts to help our patients become smoke-free. Their Quit Coaches are friendly and knowledgeable, and most patients are eligible to receive free nicotine replacement therapy (NRT). Healthcare providers can further assist their patients by letting them know what free resources are available to help them quit."

After working with a Quit Coach to develop a customized quit-plan, Mary received NRT patches and gum. She learned tips on how to use the products most effectively and how to beat cravings. Mary also threw out all smoking-related items around her home, got the inside of her car professionally cleaned, bought suckers and hard candy to have with her at all times and started volunteering at a nearby nursing home as one of many new hobbies.

"I noticed that people sit next to me at church more often," Mary said. "It's honestly probably because I don't have that 'smoker's smell' anymore. Food tastes more delicious, and my breathing also feels better than I can ever remember. I'm also saving so much money and am excited to travel to Florida in February with my family for a vacation."

Mary credits both her healthcare provider and the New York State Smokers' Quitline for her success becoming smoke-free. "It's never too late to quit, but your heart has to be in it," she said. "From there, having support is crucial. I especially thank the Quit Coaches, who were always polite and helpful – no matter what questions I asked."

Each smoker has a unique background and varying issues related to quitting, which is why Quit Coaches will work to develop personalized quit-plans. Nevertheless, when it comes to avoiding relapses, some tips are universal. Here are a few of those tips – as offered by a few of the Quit Coaches at the New York State Smokers' Quitline – for smokers as they try to follow through with their New Year's resolution to quit in 2018:

- *"Put a glass of water by your bed. When you wake up, your new routine can be to start with a sip of water instead of lighting up." – Darlene D.*
- *"Don't beat yourself up if you have a lapse. Figure out the reason for the lapse, and develop a plan so that you learn from the mistake when you try again." – Rich S.*

- *"Remember that you'll feel the health benefits right away. Nicotine will be out of your bloodstream in 72 hours after you quit." – Angie D.*
- *"Try initially to avoid activities where you and friends would normally smoke, until you feel comfortable enough being around other smokers." – Caitlin H.*
- *"Always remember why you decided you quit." – Kathy W.*

The New York State Smokers' Quitline is available as a free resource for all New Yorkers seeking help to quit smoking. Quit Coaches can provide personalized coaching support and check eligibility for a starter kit of nicotine replacement therapy. In addition, the New York State Smokers' Quitline recommends smokers talk to their healthcare providers about quitting and ask for a prescription for stop-smoking medications – most of which are covered by health insurance plans.

This New Year and any year, smokers should call the New York State Smokers' Quitline at **1-866-NY-QUITS** (1-866-697-8487) anytime the journey gets tough for achieving or maintaining a smoke-free life. Quit Coaches are available seven days a week beginning at 9 a.m., and additional resources are available online at www.nysmokefree.com.

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 Cancer Institute. It is one of the first and busiest state quitlines in the nation, and has responded to more than 2.5 million calls since its inception in 1999. Call 1-866-NY-QUITS (1-866-697-8487) or visit www.nysmokefree.com for more information.

About Roswell Park Cancer Institute

The mission of Roswell Park Cancer Institute (RPCI) is to understand, prevent and cure cancer. Founded in 1898, RPCI is one of the first cancer centers in the country to be named a National Cancer Institute-designated comprehensive cancer center and remains the only facility with this designation in Upstate New York. The Institute is a member of the prestigious National Comprehensive Cancer Network, an alliance of the nation's leading cancer centers; maintains affiliate sites; and is a partner in national and international collaborative programs. For more information, visit www.roswellpark.org, call 1-877-ASK-RPCI (1-877-275-7724) or email askrpci@roswellpark.org. Follow Roswell Park on Facebook and Twitter.