



**Department of Health**  
140 County Highway 33W  
Suite 3  
Cooperstown, NY 13326  
Phone: (607) 547-4230  
Fax: (607) 547-4385

## **NEWS RELEASE**

### **Great American Smokeout**

The Great American Smokeout takes place across the United States every year on the third Thursday of November. On this day, cigarette smokers are challenged to not smoke for 24 hours. The hope is that they will quit forever.

This year the Great American Smoke Out is on Thursday, Nov. 19. All smokers in New York State are encouraged to participate

“In 2008, 73 percent of adult New York smokers said they wanted to quit. This event provides them with an ideal opportunity,” said Susanne Smith of the Otsego County Department of Health.

“Good things will happen if you quit,” she said. “Among many other things, you will breathe more easily, have more energy, lower your risk for a heart attack, have a better sense of smell and taste, and be able to walk more easily.”

There are about 2.4 million smokers in New York State, nearly 17 percent of New Yorkers.

Every year in New York State, smoking kills 25,500 people and secondhand smoke kills 3,000. Another 570,000 New Yorkers are afflicted with serious disease caused by smoking.

The New York State Smokers Quitline offers help smokers need to overcome the addiction of tobacco. Call the Quitline at 1-866-NY-QUITS (1-866-697-8487) or visit the Quitline web site at [www.nysmokefree.com](http://www.nysmokefree.com). This is a free, confidential service to help you become smoke-free.

Research indicates success in beating the addiction when smokers have some means of support, such as:

- telephone smoking cessation hotlines
- nicotine replacement products
- counseling
- prescription medicine to lessen cravings

These free services are provided by the Quitline. Other means of support for success are for smokers to talk to their doctors, participate in stop-smoking groups, and talk to friends and family for encouragement and support.

Consider joining others in not smoking on November 19. In many communities, local volunteers support quitters, publicize the event, and press for laws that control tobacco use and discourage teenagers from starting.

Annual Smokeouts began in the 1970s when smoking and secondhand smoke were commonplace. In 1971, Arthur P. Mullaney of Randolph, Mass., encouraged people to give up cigarettes for a day and donate their cigarette money to a high school scholarship fund.

The idea blossomed and, on Nov. 18, 1976, the California Division of the American Cancer Society successfully got nearly one million smokers to quit for the day. That event marked the first Smokeout, and the Society made it nationwide in 1977. Ever since, the Smokeout has been celebrated with rallies, parades, quitting information, and even "cold turkey" menu items in schools, workplaces, Main Streets, and legislative halls throughout the U.S. Look for a Smokeout event near you!

For more information about the Great American Smokeout, call the American Cancer Society at 1-800-ACS-2345 or visit the Society's web site at [www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org).