



## A CUP OF HEALTH WITH CDC

### *Step Away from Tobacco*

World No Tobacco Day — May 31, 2011

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[Announcer] This podcast is presented by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. CDC — safer, healthier people.

[Dr. Gaynes] Welcome to *A Cup of Health with CDC*, a weekly feature of the *MMWR*, the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report. I'm your host, Dr. Robert Gaynes.

Each year, more than five million people worldwide die from heart attacks, strokes, cancers, and other diseases and they have one thing in common: they all used some form of tobacco.

Dr. Judy Kruger is a researcher with CDC's Office on Smoking and Health and she's joining us today to discuss the dangers of tobacco use and ways to quit. Welcome to the show, Judy.

[Dr. Kruger] Thank you.

[Dr. Gaynes] Judy, how does tobacco use harm the body?

[Dr. Kruger] When people inhale cigarette smoke, either directly or second-hand, they are inhaling more than 7,000 chemicals. Hundreds of these are hazardous and 69 of these are cancer causing. Bob, these chemicals are absorbed by the body and produce disease-causing cellular change.

[Dr. Gaynes] Who is most susceptible to the damaging effects of tobacco products?

[Dr. Kruger] Young children, older adults, and anyone with existing cardiovascular or pulmonary disease are at greatest risk. In teens who smoke, may cough, have asthma attacks, and develop respiratory problems, leading to more sick days, more doctor bills, and reduce athletic performance. In fact, tobacco using teens also may be more likely to use alcohol and other drugs, such as cocaine and marijuana.

[Dr. Gaynes] Judy, why is it so difficult for some people to quit using tobacco?

[Dr. Kruger] Actually, cigarettes today deliver more nicotine more quickly than ever before. The chemicals that tobacco companies put in cigarettes may make them more addictive. Given that adolescent's bodies are more sensitive to nicotine, they are more easily addicted than adults. This fact alone, helps explain why, out of all the teens who experiment with cigarettes, about 1,000 teenagers become daily smokers every day. Nicotine addiction keeps people smoking, even when they want to quit.

[Dr. Gaynes] Are there different strategies for quitting for different forms of tobacco?

[Dr. Kruger] No. The strategies that apply to quitting cigarette smoking apply to quitting other tobacco products. There's counseling behavioral cessation therapies, over-the-counter and prescription nicotine replacement products, as well as other prescription non-nicotine medications. All are effective strategies, however, counseling and medications have been found to be most effective when used together. Most smokers say they want to quit and it often takes more than one try.

[Dr. Gaynes] What are some immediate health benefits of quitting tobacco?

[Dr. Kruger] Research shows that when smokers quit, their risk for heart attack drops sharply just after one year. Stroke risk can fall to about the same as a non-smoker's after two to five years. Risks for cancer of the mouth, throat, esophagus, and bladder are cut in half after five years, and the risk of dying from lung cancer drops by half after 10 years.

[Dr. Gaynes] Judy, where can listeners get more information about quitting tobacco use?

[Dr. Kruger] Listeners can call 1-800-QUIT-NOW. That's 1-800-784-8669.

[Dr. Gaynes] Thanks, Judy. I've been talking today with CDC's Dr. Judy Kruger about the dangers of tobacco use and ways to quit.

May 31 is "World No-Tobacco Day." Take your first step towards ending tobacco use today.

Until next time, be well. This is Dr. Robert Gaynes for *A Cup of Health with CDC*.

*[Announcer] For the most accurate health information, visit [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov) or call 1-800-CDC-INFO, 24/7.*