



Charlie Crist
Governor

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State Surgeon General

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NEWS RELEASE

Free Programs to Quit Smoking

Port Charlotte (FL) – Do you need another reason to quit smoking? If you are a parent and your children are exposed to second-hand smoke they are at an increased risk for bronchitis, pneumonia, ear infections, more severe asthma, respiratory symptoms, slowed lung growth, and Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). There are an estimated 150,000 to 300,000 cases every year of infections, such as bronchitis and pneumonia in infants and children under 18 months of age who breathe second-hand smoke.

Parents can help protect their children from second-hand smoke by taking the following preventative measures:

- Do not smoke or allow others to smoke in your car or home. Opening a window does not protect your children from second-hand smoke.
- Do not take your children to a daycare where they can be exposed to second-hand smoke.
- Do not let anyone smoke near your children and teach them to stay away from second-hand smoke.

There are free programs available in the community to help you quit smoking. Charlotte County Health Department and Gulfcoast South Area Health Education Center (AHEC) have partnered to offer free classes.

The Tools to Quit program is a one-time, intense 90-minute seminar in which participants receive information on how to select and prepare for their own quit date. A trained Tobacco Cessation Specialist guides participants as they identify triggers and withdrawal symptoms, and brain storm ways to cope with them. Topics covered are addiction, withdrawal, medications, planning for a quit date, dealing with triggers, overcoming cravings and relapse prevention. Participants receive written materials, a bag of goodies for their quit day, and follow-up support. This class is offered the second Tuesday of the month from 5:00pm - 7:00pm at the Charlotte County Healthy Start Coalition in Port Charlotte. This class is also being offered at the Health Department clinic in Punta Gorda on November 8 from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm at 514 E Grace Street.

This class is free, but you must call to register in advance and receive room location information. 877-848-6696 or 941-552-1280 ext 25.



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Quit Smoking Now is a six session tobacco cessation program that motivates and prepares individuals to quit tobacco successfully. This program contains the same information as the Tools to Quit class, except that the information is delivered over six weeks and participants quit the day of the third meeting. A certified Tobacco Cessation Specialist helps participants develop a personalized quit plan and offers information on addiction, withdrawal, medications, planning for a quit date, dealing with triggers, overcoming cravings and relapse prevention. Relapse support and follow-up is provided. This program is being offered at the Health Department Clinic and Administration Campus in Port Charlotte at 1100 Loveland Boulevard. Dates are October 29, November 5 and 19, and December 3, 10, and 17, 2010. Each session is from 9:30 AM to 10:30 AM.

This program is free, but you must register in advance by calling 1-877-848-6696 or 941-552-1280 ext 25.

Visit the Charlotte County Health Department Website for additional tobacco information and resources: www.CharlotteCHD.com

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