



***NOTE TO MEDIA:** Additional "Success Stories" and corresponding photos for different regions of New York State are available to read or download at the New York State Smokers' Quitline's Online News Room: <https://nysmokefree.com/newsroom>. Please reach out to us any time for interviews to enhance your coverage of New Year's resolutions and wellness stories. Tobacco cessation experts are available locally and via Zoom; clients may be available upon request.*

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SAL A. SHARES TOBACCO-FREE TIPS FOR THE NEW YEAR

With assistance from the New York State Smokers' Quitline, Long Island resident is living proof 'it's never too late' to stop smoking

HUNTINGTON, N.Y. – January 4, 2022 – The beginning of a new year is a popular time to make resolutions for improved wellness. For those who use tobacco products, the New Year provides an opportunity to seek assistance to become tobacco-free. The **New York State Smokers' Quitline** (Quitline) understands the challenges involved to stop smoking for good and reminds all New York State residents free resources are available seven days a week at 1-866-NY-QUITS (1-866-697-8487) and nysmokefree.com.

Sal A. of Huntington, N.Y. became a marijuana smoker at age 17 before additionally using cigarettes with friends at age 27. In the fall of 2020 at age 36, Sal and his wife welcomed their first child. While it was a happy occasion, it also marked the beginning of a change in thinking for Sal.

"My lungs felt old and worn down," Sal said. "I was tired of coughing, wheezing and feeling like my airways were restricted. I also wanted to be a better role model for my son, and

certainly not smell so bad around him. More than anything, I just wanted to feel healthy again.”

Sal contacted the Quitline primarily to gain a listening ear for his struggles. He said it was just the mental boost he needed.

“We discussed triggers and developing a quit-plan, and then they mailed me free nicotine patches,” recalled Sal. “I know the patches work for many people; my body didn’t react well to them. But I think just having someone to talk to and knowing someone cared set me on the right track.”

With support from the Quitline, his therapist and weekly breathing sessions, Sal accomplished an incredible feat of stopping both cigarette and marijuana use. He is three months tobacco-free and marijuana-free and continues to experience improved health benefits with each passing month.

“I’ve always enjoyed going to the gym but could never work out more than 30 minutes without feeling incredibly winded,” he said. “Now I have the stamina for 90-minute workouts. Even when I’m walking, I notice how much better my breathing is and how fresh the air seems.”

Sal feels healthier and happier than ever. He engages in weekly Qigong classes to practice breathing techniques to release stress and negative energy. In addition to finding natural ways to focus on holistic health, Sal offers tobacco users the following tips for becoming tobacco-free in 2022:

- 1.) *“Lean on the Quitline and your healthcare professionals to get access to stop-smoking medications. All these resources will give you a great start to succeed.”*
- 2.) *“So much of becoming tobacco-free is mental. It’s not easy to quit. The first three days were hell for me; I couldn’t sleep. But stay focused and keep talking to those who support you. You’ll get through it.”*
- 3.) *“Procrastination is the enemy; your time in this life is limited. If you’re thinking about quitting, don’t wait and just do it.”*
- 4.) *“Every cigarette you smoke is a risk to your health. And as you become tobacco-free, having ‘just one cigarette’ won’t work. You’ve got to go ‘all in.’”*

The Quitline’s Quit Coaches help tobacco users develop a personalized approach for success by listing triggers and setting a quit-date. Most people also are eligible to receive a free

starter supply of nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) via mail, typically in the form of nicotine patches and often with supplemental nicotine gum or nicotine lozenges. When used as instructed and in combination, NRT products can double or triple the odds of becoming and staying tobacco-free.

The Quitline also recommends all tobacco users – whether they are practicing their first or tenth quit-attempt – to visit the CDC’s “Benefits of Quitting” website at https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/quit_smoking/how_to_quit/benefits/index.htm. This resource offers a thorough compilation of health benefits at any age, regardless of how long or how much one smoked.

The Quitline wishes all New York State residents a happy, healthy and tobacco-free 2022.

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 Comprehensive Cancer Center in Buffalo, N.Y. It is one of the first and busiest state quitlines in the nation and has responded to nearly 3 million calls since it began operating in 2000. The Quitline encourages nicotine users to talk with their healthcare professionals and access available Medicaid or health insurance benefits for stop-smoking medications. All New York State residents can call **1-866-NY-QUITS** (1-866-697-8487) for coaching and resources, free of charge, seven days a week beginning at 9 a.m. Visit www.nysmokefree.com for more information.

About Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center

Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center is a community united by the drive to eliminate cancer’s grip on humanity by unlocking its secrets through personalized approaches and unleashing the healing power of hope. Founded by Dr. Roswell Park in 1898, it is the only National Cancer Institute-designated comprehensive cancer center in Upstate New York. Learn more at www.roswellpark.org, or contact us at 1-800-ROSWELL (1-800-767-9355) or ASKRoswell@roswellpark.org.

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