



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*
- *Manhattan resident achieved success quitting and says others should keep trying and "talk it through"*

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 Victor C., a 48 year-old resident of Manhattan. He smoked for more than 30 years but is now living a smoke-free life thanks to support from his 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 Victor.

Victor began smoking at age 17 due to peer pressure and "hanging around with friends who smoked." He said he regularly smoked about half-a-pack a day for three decades. "I always knew it was bad for my health," Victor said. "As I'm getting older, I'm developing arthritis and really don't want to have to go on strong pain medications. I finally reached a point where smoking just didn't make sense anymore. It was costing so much money and I couldn't stand the way I smelled."

After a recent visit to Betances Health Center for a check-up, Victor received a referral to the New York State Smokers' Quitline from his healthcare provider, Diane Rhoden, MD. The

Center's MIS (management information system) Director, Orlando Perez, works closely with Rhoden and advises fellow healthcare providers to offer additional assistance to their tobacco-using patients through the New York State Smokers' Quitline's Opt-to-Quit™ patient referral program.

"For us, the Quitline is like a case manager," Perez said. "It gives our providers added assistance and educational materials. Working together with the Quitline, there's a real sense of accomplishment knowing we're saving lives or adding years to them."

After a call with the New York State Smokers' Quitline to develop a customized quit-plan, Victor received nicotine replacement therapy in the form of lozenges. He later followed up with a Quit Coach to learn additional tips on how to beat cravings and has maintained a smoke-free life since the early fall of 2017. Although Victor was able to quit on his first try through support from the New York State Smokers' Quitline and his healthcare provider, he knows that quitting can take numerous attempts for most smokers.

"For those who are trying to quit, I would recommend they call the Quitline anytime they have a major urge to smoke," he said. "It's very important to have a support system. With quitting, you've got to talk it through. If you talk about it with others, you'll get the help you need and take action. For me, one of the biggest factors of support was the conversations with the Quit Coaches."

Since quitting smoking, Victor feels less worried in his life and walks and runs more. One way he reminds himself about the many benefits of being smoke-free is by putting \$8 in a jar every day and then enjoying the extra cash at the end of each month. To those who have tried quitting before but still have not broken the habit, Victor says keep the faith and try again. "Sooner or later, enough is enough – it will work," he said.

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 some 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.