

Western Wisconsin Working for Tobacco-Free Living

www.W3TFL.org

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Quarterly Coalition Meeting!

Hello everyone; W3TFL will be meeting quarterly in 2016. The dates are listed below so mark your calendars!

- **Thursday March 17th 10:00 AM**
- Thursday June 16th 10:00 AM
- Thursday September 15th 10:00 AM
- Thursday December 15th 10:00 AM

**The meeting will be held at the Polk County Public Health Department. 100 Polk County Plaza Balsam Lake WI 54810*

Kick Butts Day March 16th, 2016

What is Kick Butts Day?

Kick Butts Day is a day of activism that empowers youth to stand out, speak up and seize control against Big Tobacco at more than 1,000 events planned by independent organizers across the United States and around the world. This year's Kick Butts Day will be held March 16, 2016.

Why is Kick Butts Day important?

We have made great strides in the fight against tobacco. But every day, more than 3,000 kids under 18 try smoking for the first time and 700 kids become new regular, daily smokers. Tobacco use is still the leading cause of preventable death in the U.S., killing more than 480,000 people every year.

By getting involved in Kick Butts Day and other activities, America's youth can raise awareness about the tobacco problem, encourage peers to be tobacco-free and support effective solutions to reduce tobacco use.

How can I get involved?

You can organize a Kick Butts Day event or activity for youth to mobilize them and raise awareness about the problems of tobacco use in your school or community.

To get started with your event, visit www.kickbuttsday.org. Here you will be able to register your event, find ideas for activities, as well as find ways to supercharge your event to reach even more people!

Other Tobacco Products (OTPs) Presentations

If your organization/group is interested in learning more about other tobacco products (OTPs), please contact Mary. We would love to come and do a presentation to spread the word!



Why Depressed People Have A Harder Time Quitting Smoking

As anyone who has battled with it could tell you, depression is never a particularly fun thing to deal with, but a new study that's just been published this week by the journal *Addiction* is making big waves for its revelation about a way that depression impacts sufferers' health. Apparently, according to a team of researchers from Yale School Of Medicine, the Cancer Council of Australia and Melbourne's Centre for Epidemiology and Biostatistics, suffering from depression makes people more likely to try to quit smoking, but it also means they're less likely to be successful at it.



So what does this mean? Are depressives less realistic about their abilities, more prone to temptation, or just far more vulnerable to the pull of nicotine? The answer's not so simple. It actually fits into a bigger picture (and bigger questions) about depression, its relationship to addiction, and its many diverse effects on the brain and the body. Depression may make quitting smoking harder, but the reasons why are more complex than just "depression sucks and makes things terrible." (Although that is definitely part of it.) So what's really going on here?

Why Quitting Smoking Is Harder For Depressives

In the new study, a team of scientists brought together 6811 smokers across Canada, Australia, the US and the UK. They were looking for something specific: did depression make people more likely to want to quit smoking, and did it have any effect on whether they were actually able to successfully quit?

The researchers tracked their thousands of subjects through their different quit attempts, and found something tricky: depression, it seems, helps motivate people to try to quit smoking, but it also makes it more likely that the attempt will fail and they'll be back on the cigarettes within a month of quitting. And, sadly, the scientists also looked at gender breakdown, and found that this tendency to relapse seems to actually be *stronger* in depressive women. So depressives are caught in a nasty cycle: they try to quit more often than non-depressed folks, but also fail more often.

There's a very strong link between depression and substance abuse of many kinds, from alcohol to cigarettes to heroin. In the United Kingdom, for instance, smokers are twice as likely to have depression than non-smokers. This may just be an understandable predilection to self-medicate, but there are other possible explanations, too. The Neuroscience Department at the Mount Sinai School Of Medicine, for instance, is working on understanding why addiction and depression seem to coexist so often. They point out that basically, a depressive brain looks very similar to an addictive brain, and that may mean they share some key vulnerabilities.

Worryingly, the relationship goes further: studies have also demonstrated that cigarette smoking might make depression symptoms worse, as well as vice versa. So depressive people with tobacco addictions are caught in a strange knot that it's tricky for us to untangle. In any case, it looks like the depressive brain puts up a lot of road blocks when it comes to quitting smoking. And, unfortunately, that's just one of a host of habits that depression seems to hinder in our lives.

So What Does This All Mean?

The overall message to get from this isn't that depression is hopeless and makes sufferers into doddering lunatics. It's that depression is real and not just "in your mind," and that difficulty quitting an addictive substance while suffering from it isn't reflective of a lack of willpower or some kind of personal weakness. It reflects the neurological reality of certain vulnerabilities in your brain, and we're still trying to understand exactly how and why they work.

But, on the bright side, quitting smoking may do you more good than just removing tobacco-related health risks; a 2014 study in the *British Medical Journal* found that symptoms of depression, anxiety and stress seriously dropped after people quit smoking. The researchers actually found that quitting smoking was as effective as being on antidepressants. Something to put in your pipe and smoke (or not).



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