Quitting smoking this summer

Dear God, my body is fearfully and wonderfully made. Help me to listen to it and care for it. Amen.

Preventing cancer and catching it early

The American Cancer Society estimates that cancer will kill nearly 600 thousand people in the U.S. during 2015. For many cancers, early detection correlates with much higher survival rates. In addition, some cancers can be prevented through lifestyle changes and working closely with your doctor to detect – and address – cancer’s early warning signs.

Here are some ways that you can fight cancer through prevention and early detection:

Have regular checkups. Scheduling checkups isn’t just about undergoing cancer screenings. By developing a relationship with your doctor, you will both have a better understanding of your health. This can make it easier to identify changes that can indicate a cancer risk.

Investigate your medical history. The tendency to develop some types of cancer can run in families. Let your doctor know about your family history and discuss whether genetic testing is a good option for you to consider.

Stop smoking. Smoking is associated with many different types of cancer and contributes to a host of other health conditions. When you quit smoking, you improve your overall health dramatically.

Eat a healthy diet, and maintain a healthy weight. Certain cancers are associated with being overweight or obese. Some researchers believe that balanced diets that include a variety of colorful fruits and vegetables may provide protection against some cancers. If you aren’t already exercising regularly, talk to your doctor. He or she can let you know if exercise is a good idea for you.

Don’t ignore warning signs. Never ignore symptoms such as a changing mole, rectal bleeding or abdominal pain. While these symptoms don’t always indicate cancer, it’s important to see your doctor so that he or she can assess your condition.

Three reasons why summer is a great time to quit smoking

Summer is time for healthy outdoor activities, connecting with family and enjoying life. It’s also a great time to quit smoking. Here are three reasons why the time is right:

1. The kids are home from school
   You know about the dangers of second-hand smoke, so you’re already avoiding smoking around your kids. You’re with them more now that they are home, so you’ve likely already cut back on tobacco use. Now is an excellent opportunity to cut back all the way and quit smoking forever.

2. You want to be active
   The sun is shining and the air is warm. You want to be outside and active – walking, playing sports and swimming. Yet you don’t have as much energy as you’d like, and you find yourself huffing and puffing after a couple of miles or laps. Many ex-smokers find that their breathing improves soon after they quit smoking. Make the most of the summer weather by getting rid of the cigarettes that are holding you back.

3. Summer is a time of transition
   Things are often a bit jumbled during the summer: Your family is together, you’re taking time off from work and the days are longer. Since you aren’t in your same old routine, now’s the time to shake things up a little bit more and drop some bad habits . . . like smoking.

Help is available.

Want to stop smoking but need help? Talk to your doctor. He or she can offer support and recommend strategies. If necessary, your doctor may decide to prescribe medication that can both help you quit and manage withdrawal symptoms.

Resources:

Advocatehealth.com • Prevent Cancer Foundation: preventcancer.org • National Cancer Institute: cancer.gov/about-cancer/causes-prevention • Skin Cancer Foundation: skincancer.org/prevention

Advocate Health Care
Inspiring medicine. Changing lives.