



# November Health Promotion Toolbox

## Tobacco Free Living Month

### Plan of the Week

Each week during Tobacco Free Living Month, share one of the paragraphs below with your command to enhance understanding of the importance of quitting tobacco. You can access additional information, tools, and resources by clicking on the blue, underlined hyperlinked text.

### Week 1

**It's important to live a tobacco free life to stay healthy and maintain readiness as a Sailor or Marine.** The 2015 Fleet and Marine Corps Health Risk Assessment shows that 22 percent of active duty Sailors and 28 percent of active duty Marines indicated they were current smokers (including electronic products) while 10 percent of Sailors and 21 percent of Marines indicated they use smokeless tobacco at least one day a week.<sup>1</sup> Compared to Sailors and Marines, the national smoking rate among American adults is much lower, at 16.8%<sup>2</sup>, as is the use of smokeless tobacco, at 3.4%.<sup>3</sup> Quitting smoking provides [immediate health benefits](#). After 20 minutes, your pulse and blood pressure drop, and after 12 hours, the levels of carbon monoxide in your body return to normal. Quitting tobacco will also speed your recovery of other injuries and provide positive health effects for other parts of your body. There are many resources and programs that you, your family, and friends can use to quit tobacco; it is never too late to quit. For more information, please visit the [Tobacco Free Living Web page](#).

### Week 2

**Cigars and hookah are still harmful, even if you don't use them often.** The perception that these products are less harmful than traditional tobacco products is false; they are not a safe alternative to smoking cigarettes. [Hookah](#) has the same addictive properties and because of the way a hookah is smoked, users often absorb more toxic substances compared to smoking cigarettes and one full size cigar can have as much nicotine as several cigarettes. For more information on cigar smoking visit the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#).



## Week 3

**Find the motivation to quit tobacco and get support from family and friends.** There are plenty of [reasons to consider quitting](#), from the increasing costs of a pack of cigarettes to wanting to be healthier inside and out. Whatever your reasons are, it's important to gain support from your family and friends for encouragement and accountability. Whether you are thinking about quitting or supporting someone who is, check out the [Starter Kit to Quit](#) for tips, considerations, and actions you can take. This week and throughout the rest of the month, you can support your peers, family, and friends in their quit by participating in [NMCPHC's Support the Quit](#) program and the [American Cancer Society's Great American Smokeout](#) on November 17th, a day where people pledge to start their smoke-free life.

## Week 4

**Don't jeopardize the health of your family and friends by smoking.** Secondhand smoke is dangerous and [harmful to the health of everyone](#), including you, your loved ones, and your friends. Thousands die each year from heart disease, lung cancer, and stroke caused by passive and environmental secondhand smoke.<sup>4</sup> [Secondhand smoke is also very harmful for children](#) and can cause serious health problems, like middle ear infections, asthma attacks, bronchitis, and other breathing problems.<sup>4</sup> Babies born to mothers who smoke are more at risk for Sudden Infant Death Syndrome.<sup>4</sup> Protect yourself and your friends and family by not allowing smoking in or around your house or your car, even with the windows down.

## References

<sup>1</sup> Navy and Marine Corps Public Health Center EpiData Center Department. Fleet and Marine Corps Health Risk Assessment 2015. <http://www.med.navy.mil/sites/nmcphc/Documents/health-promotion-wellness/general-tools-and-programs/2015-HRA-Report-TR-214-2016.pdf>. Published May 2016.

<sup>2</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Current Cigarette Smoking Among Adults—United States, 2005–2014. *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report* 2015;64(44):1233-40.

<sup>3</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Smokeless Tobacco Use in the United States. [https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data\\_statistics/fact\\_sheets/smokeless/use\\_us/index.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/fact_sheets/smokeless/use_us/index.htm). Updated 25 July 2016

<sup>4</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Health Effects of Secondhand Smoke. [http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data\\_statistics/fact\\_sheets/secondhand\\_smoke/health\\_effects/index.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/fact_sheets/secondhand_smoke/health_effects/index.htm). Updated 5 March 2014.