# Be Tobacco Free

## Healthy Living Message

### What's Important to Know?

Quitting tobacco is the single most important thing you can do to improve your health and protect your family's health. If you quit smoking or other forms of tobacco, you and your family will experience short and long-term health benefits. It's never too late to quit—your health will improve at any age after quitting tobacco!

All forms of tobacco use—cigarettes, cigars, pipes, snuff, snus, chewing tobacco and other tobacco products—are harmful. Tobacco use harms nearly every organ of the body and causes:

- Cancers
- Heart disease and stroke
- Diabetes
- Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and other lung/breathing problems
- Complications in those who are pregnant

Secondhand smoke is the smoke released from a burning cigarette, cigar or pipe, and the smoke exhaled by the smoker. There is no safe level of secondhand smoke. It can have immediate harmful effects on non-smokers' health and can increase their risk of heart disease, lung cancer, and other health problems by 20-30%.

Tobacco use is the largest cause of preventable illness and death in the United States. Tobacco and secondhand smoke kill approximately 480,000 people in the U.S. each year.

Many good things happen as soon as you quit. You'll breathe easier, save money, smell better, and have more energy. If you're pregnant, your baby will be healthier. You'll also be protecting your health and protecting your family and friends from secondhand smoke.

### Want to Know More?

Talk with your VA health care team about help with quitting tobacco. Your team can help you in several different ways. They can provide medications, tips, tools, behavioral counseling and support. They can also help you join other Veterans in a class led by your hospital's expert in quitting smoking. For more information go to: https://www.prevention.va.gov/Healthy_Living/Be_Tobacco_Free.asp

### Resources

- VHA tobacco cessation resources:
  - www.publichealth.va.gov/smoking
  - smokefree.gov/veterans
- VHA National Tobacco Cessation Quitline for Veterans: 1-855-QUIT VET (1-855-784-8838). Counseling is available Monday through Friday from 8 am to 10 pm ET.
- SmokefreeVET: Text the word 'VET' to 47848 from your mobile phone or visit www.Smokefree.gov/VET for the SmokefreeVET text messaging system.
- Veterans Health Library: www.veteranshealthlibrary.va.gov