

SMOKING

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Many of the relapses occur because smokers do not tend to the physical and emotional challenges that occur during the quitting process, which local health experts say can take up to a year. In fact, people who seek assistance are four times more likely to quit than those who go at it alone cold turkey, said Jeanette Kowalik, Wauwatosa Health Department public health specialist.

Customizing smoking cessation programs is a relatively new concept that has worked in part because of the pharmaceutical innovations that can make quitting less overwhelming.

Most people have heard of the nicotine patch or gum, but maybe not the pills, nasal spray or lozenges now on the market.

In the case of the nicotine-replacement products, the user remains at risk for health issues like high blood pressure, but the tar will not enter their lungs, Danielle Herrmann, pharmacist for Aurora Pharmacy, 211 North Ave., said. The products put on hold the physical withdrawal symptoms in order for the person to deal with more of the psychological issues like the desire to pick up a cigarette after meals or how to handle stressors without smoking.

Prescription pills like Chantix block receptors so the user does not get a high each time they smoke, making cigarettes less attractive.

The best product depends on how much a person smokes and their smoking patterns, Gilbert said.

SMOKING STATISTICS

	Wauwatosa	Statewide
Adult smokers	10%	19.6%
Adult smokers who made at least one attempt to quit in the last year	39%	58.5%
Smokers who expose people to secondhand smoke in the home or vehicles	7%	18%
Youth smokers	17.3%	20.5%
Youth smokers who have made at least one attempt to quit in the last year	41.5%	58.6%
Youth who use smokeless tobacco	4%	7.7%

Source: Wauwatosa Health Department

Some plans do not pay for aids

Many insurance plans do not cover smoking cessation aids, an obstacle for some patients trying to quit and save money, White said.

She calls smoking cessation a two-step process, because "at some point they will have to get over the nicotine."

That is where the counseling becomes essential. However, the number and frequency of counseling sessions varies among patients.

In the past, the American Lung Association has recommended eight sessions as part of its Freedom from Smoking program, for which White serves as a facilitator. But that number can be modified based on a patient's needs and if Wheaton Franciscan's \$50 per session cost becomes an obstacle to their quitting, she said.

The Wauwatosa Health Department will offer the Freedom from Smoking plan on Tuesdays starting March 3 and running through April 14.

Immediate benefits to quitting

Local health experts said a

FYI

Wisconsin Tobacco Quit Line:
www.ctri.wisc.edu/quitline.html

The Quit Net: Quitnet.org

Center for Disease Control Tobacco Information and Prevention Source: cdc.gov/tobacco/how2quit.html

American Lung Association:
Lungusa.org

body's functions will improve significantly within days or even hours of quitting.

Within the first 48 hours of quitting, pulse, blood pressure, carbon monoxide and oxygen levels and body temperatures return to normal, nerve endings start regrowing, the ability to smell and taste improve and the chance of a sudden heart attack decreases.

The benefits continue to improve for the next 10 to 15 years to dramatically decrease cancer, coronary heart disease, and stroke risks.

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