

## WEEKLY SAFETY TIP – 11/16/09 – SINGLE MOST PREVENTABLE CAUSE OF DEATH IN USE

It's the single most preventable cause of death in the US. More deaths are attributed to this single act than alcohol, AIDS, illegal drugs, car crashes, fires, murders, and suicides **combined**. 400,000 deaths per year, per the Centers for Disease Control, are attributed to tobacco related causes. Smoking and chewing tobacco causes one death every 72 seconds in the US. ([see the statistics through this link http://www.quit-smoking.net/smoking-statistics.html](http://www.quit-smoking.net/smoking-statistics.html))

Cancer, heart attacks, stroke - you already know that tobacco plays a major role in those diseases. But did you know that use of tobacco increases your likelihood of catching a cold, the flu or bronchitis? Did you know that smoking may be a contributing factor to diabetes? It increases blood pressure, fatigue, and insomnia. It increases the pain from fibromyalgia and migranes.

Smokers and tobacco users have more risk in the workplace than non-smokers. It increases the chances of mesothelioma (cancer) from exposure to asbestos as well as an increased chance of bronchiolitis obliterans, the rare lung disease associated from exposure to butter flavorings (popcorn lung disease). Use of tobacco is linked to periodontitis, loss of tissue and bone in your teeth - necessitating more dental appointments. It is also linked to peptic ulcers, which can be fatal in some cases. ( [see Health Risks of Smoking, linked here: http://quitsmoking.about.com/od/tobaccostatistics/a/healtheffects.htm](http://quitsmoking.about.com/od/tobaccostatistics/a/healtheffects.htm))

To top it all off, use of tobacco has increased in the US. ([to see article, click here: http://www2.journalnow.com/content/2009/nov/13/adult-smoke-rate-in-us-up/](http://www2.journalnow.com/content/2009/nov/13/adult-smoke-rate-in-us-up/))

) After learning the risks of smoking and/or chewing tobacco, it maybe hard to believe, but it is true. But the risks can be reduced by quitting!

- Just 20 minutes after quitting, your heart rate and blood pressure will drop.
- Just 12 hours after your last smoke, the carbon monoxide level in your blood returns to normal.
- 1 year after quitting, your risk of heart disease is 1/2 that of someone who still smokes.
- 5 years after quitting, your risk of a stroke is the same as a nonsmoker.

So what can you do? If you are an employer, you can encourage your workforce to participate in the Great American Smoke Out - this Thursday, November 19. Sponsored by the Cancer Society, there are free posters and materials (English and Spanish) on this website - [Accept the Great American Smokeout Challenge. http://www.cancer.org/docroot/subsite/greatamericans/Smokeout.asp](http://www.cancer.org/docroot/subsite/greatamericans/Smokeout.asp)

If you are a smoker, and want to quit, the Cancer Society and the Great American Smokeout have a 24 hour online call center where you can sign up to speak to a confidential and friendly person, trained to help you quit smoking. For your convenience, follow this [Link to QuitLine http://www.cancer.org/docroot/subsite/greatamericans/Smokeout.asp](http://www.cancer.org/docroot/subsite/greatamericans/Smokeout.asp)

Smoking and tobacco use is the most **preventable** cause of death in the US. Helping someone to quit smoking can be a life changing and life saving experience. Celebrate the Great American SmokeOut, and help someone - even yourself - quit today.

**Safety is Contagious, Pass it on!**