



## Health Gurus Say Resolve to Quit Smoking - One Week at a Time. A new idea that might even help Obama quit and stay quit.

*New York City (December 29, 2008)* - While millions of Americans will resolve to quit smoking January 1st, many will be puffing away again by Valentines Day. It doesn't have to be that way. With the Stay Quit Monday idea, smokers can strengthen their commitment by quitting each and every week, increasing their chances of making this the year they quit for good.

"Stay Quit Monday is perfect for someone like President-elect Obama," Sid Lerner, Chairman of the Healthy Monday Campaign, mused. "Here's a guy who wants to quit, who's ready to quit, but who's very busy, with a stressful job and who just needs that extra motivational push each week to stay on track."

"We know there's a high relapse rate for first-time quitters and that it takes a number of attempts for most people to stop smoking altogether," says Frances Stillman, who co-directs the Institute for Global Tobacco Control at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. "Using each Monday to reaffirm their goal of quitting is a sensible way to stay on track," she suggests.

It's simple math. "For most people who quit, it takes from 7 to 10 tries," says Lerner, "We urge smokers to think about it realistically and use the start of each week to recommit to breaking their addiction. If you just try once a year on your birthday or New Years, those "tries" can add up to a decade before you finally quit, but if you try every Monday, and keep at it, chances are good you may succeed within a single year."

"Many smokers will be inspired this New Years to take an important first step towards a smoke-free life. They can use Stay Quit Monday to reinforce their commitment," said Donald Distasio, CEO of the American Cancer Society, Eastern Division, adding, "If you're resolving to quit, call your American Cancer Society Quitline at 1-800-ACS-2345 or visit [www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org). We can help you stay quit."

"Quitting smoking is a marathon, not a 100-yard dash," said Dr. John C. Norcross, Distinguished University Fellow at the University of Scranton. "It helps to set a specific quit date as long as you understand that it's just that - a beginning. Without realistic expectations, focusing on a single day to quit can be self-defeating, because it promotes all-or-nothing thinking. Instead, realistically prepare for the long haul, not the short trip." Norcross has written extensively about New Years resolutions.

"We think of Monday as the January of the week" says Healthy Monday President Peggy Neu. "Our research indicates that people view Monday as an opportunity for a fresh start and are more likely to start a healthy regimen on Monday than any other day."

"Expect occasional slips in your resolutions," Norcross advises. "Most successful resolvers slip in January. But a slip need not be a fall; pick yourself up and recommit to your resolution." In fact, one study Norcross cites showed that 71% of successful resolvers said their first slip had actually *strengthened* their efforts.

A report last year from the Institute of Medicine says that "motivating more quit attempts among people who now make none, and more frequent quit attempts among those who now try to quit" is one of five requirements for achieving higher cessation rates. <sup>1</sup>

Smoking is responsible for nearly one in five deaths in the United States and globally it's the number one cause of preventable death. Dean Michael Klag, of Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, called smoking a big part of a "chronic disease pandemic," adding, "If we sharply reduce tobacco use, it will have a tremendous impact on cancer, heart disease, respiratory diseases and other tobacco-related diseases."

### Your *Stay Quit Monday* Toolbox

While quitting is hard, you can get help each week from [HealthyMonday.org](http://HealthyMonday.org).

Get weekly Monday messages at About.com's [quitsmoking.about.com](http://quitsmoking.about.com).

Check in with the American Cancer Society's [Quitline](http://Quitline) at 1-800-ACS-2345 every week or visit [cancer.org](http://cancer.org)

Visit [smokefree.gov](http://smokefree.gov) for expert advice and tools weekly to help you stay on track

For more resources on quitting smoking and staying quit, visit the Stay Quit Monday page at [HealthyMonday.org/stayquit](http://HealthyMonday.org/stayquit).

The Stay Quit Monday campaign is a Healthy Monday project of Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health and Syracuse University Newhouse School of Public Communications.

<sup>1</sup> Institute of Medicine. 2007. *Ending the Tobacco Problem: A Blueprint for the Nation*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press.