
Powerful new “Tips From Former Smokers” ads focus on living with vision loss and colorectal cancer

CDC’s graphic anti-smoking campaign will air March 30

Press Release

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Contact: [Media Relations \(http://www.cdc.gov/media\)](http://www.cdc.gov/media)

(404) 639-3286

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The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is launching its 2015 “Tips From Former Smokers” campaign with a series of powerful new ads featuring former smokers who suffer from smoking-related illnesses, including vision loss and colorectal cancer.

Ads also highlight the benefits of quitting for smokers’ loved ones, and the importance of quitting cigarettes completely, not just cutting down. Beginning March 30, these ads will run for 20 weeks on television, radio, billboards, online, and in theaters, magazines, and newspapers.

CDC’s successful *Tips* national tobacco education campaign has helped prompt millions of smokers to try to quit since it began in 2012. It has also proven to be a “best buy” in public health by costing just \$393 to save a year of life.

“These former smokers are helping save tens of thousands of lives by sharing their powerful stories of how smoking has affected them,” said CDC Director Tom Frieden, M.D., M.P.H. “These new real-life ads will help smokers quit, adding years to their lives and life to their years.”

In 2014, *Tips* ads had an immediate and strong impact. When the ads were on the air, about 80 percent more people called the national quitline, 1-800-QUIT-NOW, for free help. Since 2012, *Tips* ads have generated more than 500,000 additional calls to the toll-free quitline number.

One of this year's new ad participants is Marlene, 68, who started smoking in high school and began losing her vision to macular degeneration at age 56. Besides quitting smoking, the best chance for slowing her vision loss is a drug that must be injected through a needle into her eyes. To date, she has had more than 100 shots in each eye. "This will probably go on for the rest of my life," said Marlene. "If I'd had a crystal ball many years ago, I would never have put that first cigarette in my mouth."

The ads also feature:

- Mark, 47, an Air Force veteran who used cigarettes and smokeless tobacco through two tours of duty in the Persian Gulf. He quit in 2009 when he developed rectal cancer at age 42.
- Julia, 58, who smoked for more than 20 years before developing colon cancer at age 49, followed by surgery and months of chemotherapy. She needed an ostomy bag taped to a hole in her abdomen to collect waste.
- Tiffany, 35, whose mother died from lung cancer when Tiffany was 16. She quit smoking when her own daughter turned 16 so she could be around for important milestones in her daughter's life. Tiffany's ad will run as a public service announcement.
- Kristy, 35, who tried using e-cigarettes to quit smoking cigarettes but ended up using both products instead of quitting. Kristy then suffered a collapsed lung, and was diagnosed with early COPD (lung disease) before she quit smoking completely.

Nationally, about 3 in 4 adult e-cigarette users also smoke cigarettes. If you only cut down the number of cigarettes you smoke by adding another tobacco product, like e-cigarettes, you still face serious health risks. Smokers must quit smoking completely to fully protect their health -- even a few cigarettes a day are dangerous. Kristy's ads will be featured on the radio and in print.

"All the *Tips* ad participants are heroes," said Tim McAfee, M.D., M.P.H., senior medical officer in CDC's Office on Smoking and Health. "By courageously sharing their painful personal stories, they're inspiring millions of Americans to make the life-saving decision to quit smoking."

Cigarette smoking kills more than 480,000 Americans each year and remains the leading cause of preventable death and disease in the United States. For every American who dies from a smoking-related disease, about 30 more suffer at least one serious illness from smoking.

The *Tips* ads encourage smokers to call 1-800-QUIT-NOW or to visit www.cdc.gov/tips (<http://www.cdc.gov/tips>) to view the personal stories from the campaign. The website includes detailed assistance developed by the National Cancer Institute to support smokers trying to quit.

Besides the human cost, smoking takes a devastating toll on our nation's economy. It costs more than \$300 billion a year—nearly \$170 billion in direct medical care for adults and more than \$156 billion in lost productivity. The *Tips* campaign serves as an important counter to the more than \$8.3 billion spent

annually by the tobacco industry to make cigarettes more attractive and more affordable, particularly to young people.

To find profiles of the former smokers, other campaign resources, and links to the ads, visit www.cdc.gov/tips (<http://www.cdc.gov/tips>).

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