

Trying to quit cold turkey?

There are better ways with Tobacco Free Florida cessation services



**Andrée
Aubrey**

MY VIEW

As the director of the Tobacco Free Florida cessation program at the FSU College of Medicine, I read with interest the Sept. 24 My View column by Barbara Clark (“Why aren’t we talking about COPD?”). Because I’m a former smoker and I’ve lost several family members to the ravages of cancer and lung disease caused by smoking, I understand the range of emotions she expressed.

After my aunt’s pulmonary lobectomy to remove a cancerous part of her lung, her physician advised my cousins to remove as much thirdhand smoke as possible from her home before she was discharged from the hospital. They had the carpets and draperies cleaned, scrubbed down the walls, washed windows and deep-cleaned furniture and other surfaces.

But within two weeks of her hospital discharge, my aunt resumed her decades-long smoking habit. Our

family struggled with anger toward her for taking such chances with her health, even as hospice services guided and supported us. My aunt died a few short weeks later.

While I empathize with the anger and frustration family members feel toward loved ones who cannot quit, we must remember that the vast majority of users decide to experiment with tobacco while they’re teenagers. In the U.S. in 2013, the tobacco industry spent over \$9.5 billion — more than \$25 million each day — on marketing designed to attract young people. The 2014 Surgeon General’s Report documents that this advertising influences them to initiate the smoking habit, while the highly addictive nature of nicotine maintains it.

I quit cold-turkey over 30 years ago, and that is where most smokers start. But cold-turkey is the least effective method of quitting, with a success rate of only 3-5 percent.

We are so fortunate that Florida has a highly effective program, Tobacco Free Florida, administered by the state Department of Health. Tobacco Free Florida encourages you to Quit Your Way with the tools that work best for you. These tools include

a six-session group, led by highly trained specialists, that provides support from others who are also struggling to overcome this addiction.

Individual telephone counseling provides three sessions to help you develop a personalized quit plan. There is a Web Quit option for those who like to go at their own pace. All interested quitters will benefit from text-message and email tips. All services are free and — for people older than 18, if medically appropriate — include starter packs of nicotine replacement therapy medications that significantly improve success.

According to the cessation evaluation conducted last year by Professional Data Analysts, users who take advantage of Tobacco Free Florida services are five to 11 times more likely to quit than those who try on their own.

So even if you can’t quit now, consider visiting www.tobaccofreeflorida.com to view the resources that are available to you — when you’re ready.

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