

CDC launches new round of graphic anti-smoking ads

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Former smokers harmed by tobacco tell their stories.

(HealthDay)—U.S. health officials on Thursday released a new round of graphic anti-smoking ads featuring former smokers living with the ravages of tobacco.

The new [ads](#) highlight the benefits of quitting for the families of smokers and the importance of giving up cigarettes completely, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

"Bottom line, these ads will save lives and they will also save money," CDC director Dr. Tom Frieden said during a news conference Thursday.

Tobacco is "public health enemy number one," Frieden said. "More than 1,000 Americans per day are killed by tobacco—nearly 500,000 every

year."

Yet 42 million Americans still smoke, according to the CDC.

Most Americans who smoke want to quit, he said, and "ads like these help them quit. We know that these ads have saved tens of thousands of lives and prevented hundreds of millions of dollars in [health care costs](#)."

Frieden stressed that the increasing use of e-cigarettes is a problematic way to quit smoking.

"If an e-cigarette helps an individual to quit smoking for good, that's a good thing," he said. "But many children are using e-cigarettes and getting hooked on nicotine, and that's an addiction that can stay with you for life. Many adults who think they are going to get off cigarettes by using e-cigarettes are actually continuing to smoke, and that does more harm than good."

Nationally, about three in four adult e-cigarette users also smoke cigarettes, according to the CDC.

Among those former smokers featured in the ads is Julia, 58, who smoked for more than 20 years and developed colon cancer at 49. "I tried to quit many times," she said during the news conference. "With the help of my family and my faith, I was able to quit smoking successfully. Unfortunately, I did not walk away from smoking without consequences. The battle I fought with cancer isn't something I would wish on anybody."

Other participants included:

- Marlene, 67, who started smoking in high school and began losing her vision at 56. She quit smoking, but now needs monthly

injection into her eyes to slow the progression of macular degeneration.

- Mark, 47, an Air Force veteran who smoked cigarettes and used [smokeless tobacco](#). He quit in 2009 after developing rectal cancer at age 42.
- 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 events in her daughter's life.
- Kristy, 35, who tried e-[cigarettes](#) to quit but ended up using both products. She then suffered a collapsed lung and developed early COPD before quitting completely.

In a statement, Matthew Myers, president of the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, said, "The new campaign recognizes that winning the fight against tobacco requires a sustained commitment. The [tobacco](#) companies spend \$8.8 billion a year—\$1 million every hour—to market their deadly and addictive products, and they never let up in trying to entice kids and keep the customers they already have. Efforts to prevent kids from smoking and help smokers quit must be equally sustained and aggressive."

Smoking also takes a toll on the economy, according to the CDC. Each year, it costs more than \$300 billion a year—nearly \$170 billion in direct medical costs and more than \$156 billion in lost productivity.

Beginning March 30, the ads will run for 20 weeks on television, radio, billboards, online, and in theaters, magazines and newspapers.

According to Frieden, the ads that ran in 2014 had an immediate effect. When they were on the air, about 80 percent more people called the national quit line, he noted.

More information: Visit [Smokefree.gov](#) for tips on quitting.

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