



PUTNAM COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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www.putnamcountyny.gov/health

A PHAB-ACCREDITED HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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Free Smoking Cessation Offered in Putnam Most Successful Quitters Have Failed Before

BREWSTER, NY- Putnam county residents have a new chance to take the first steps toward a tobacco-free life. The Putnam County Department of Health (PCDOH) will offer residents a free smoking cessation program, with a group “Quit Day” falling on the eve of the Great American Smokeout, November 21. According to the American Cancer Society, smoking remains the single largest preventable cause of death and illness in the world. Locally, smoking remains a major health concern. While only 11.7% of residents in the Mid-Hudson Valley are smokers, 18.3% of Putnam County residents smoke, according to the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System survey from 2016.

The American Cancer Society’s Great American Smokeout is an annual event that encourages and offers support to smokers to make a plan to quit smoking or, for some, to quit smoking on the day of the event – the third Thursday in November each year. Quitting smoking isn’t easy and the PCDOH is supporting residents with an evidence-based approach to kicking the habit. This autumn, Putnam residents can come together to make a change that could save their lives. The eight-week Freedom From Smoking (FFS) program starts October 30, and continues every Wednesday, from 6:00 to 7:30 p.m., at the health department’s main office at 1 Geneva Road, Brewster. The last class is on December 18.

The group leader is a FFS/American Lung Association-certified facilitator from the health department. The sessions start with discussions and guidance for preparing and planning to quit. Each person’s experience with quitting smoking is different. The FFS program uses proven activities and tools to help participants understand their own relationship with tobacco—and how to enjoy a tobacco-free life. Nicotine replacement products (NRT) such as the patch and gum will be available, also for free, while supplies last. Using NRT is encouraged, and will be discussed in detail as part of the program, but it is not required.

“While there are currently 16 million Americans living with a smoking-related disease, we know that the benefits to quitting smoking are almost immediately measurable. After just 12 hours the carbon monoxide level in your blood drops to normal. Somewhere between 2 weeks to 3 months your circulation improves, and your lung function increases,” says Health Commissioner Michael J. Nesheiwat, MD.

Widely regarded as the gold standard in quit-smoking programs, the FFS program was created by the American Lung Association, an organization with more than 50 years of experience helping smokers quit. Some smokers feel hopeless after unsuccessful attempts at quitting. The FFS Program recognizes these feelings are part of the journey to become a non-smoker and stresses the fact that most successful quitters have failed at it before. The program empowers participants to create their own path to success by instilling strategies for managing stress, avoiding weight gain and staying active during their quit, and after.

Pre-registration is required, as group size is limited. More information on the program can be found online at www.freedomfromsmoking.org. For more information or to pre-register, contact the Putnam County Department of Health at (845) 808-1390, ext. 43155.

The mission of the Putnam County Department of Health, nationally accredited by the Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB), is to improve and protect the health of the Putnam County community, composed of nearly 100,000 residents. Core services include community health assessment, disease surveillance and control, emergency preparedness, environmental health protection, family health promotion and health education. For more information, please visit our County website at www.putnamcountyny.com ; or visit our social media sites on Facebook at www.facebook.com/putnamhealth and Twitter @PutnamHealthNY.

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