Greene County Public Health
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Press Release

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GCPH Encourages Residents to Take the First Step Toward a Smoke-Free Life During the Annual Great American Smokeout®

XENIA, OH – Greene County Public Health (GCPH) is encouraging everyone in Greene County to commit—or recommit—to living smoke-free by participating in the American Cancer Society's (ACS) **Great American Smokeout® on Thursday, November 19, 2026.**

Quitting smoking isn't easy. It takes time, preparation, and a plan. You don't have to quit all at once. Start with day one. The Great American Smokeout® is an opportunity to take that first step toward a healthier, smoke-free life. Thousands of people across the country will also use this day to begin their journey toward better health.

For anyone who uses tobacco or nicotine products, quitting is one of the most important steps they can take to improve their health. Whether you're a teen, a young adult, or someone who has smoked for many years, it's never too late to quit. GCPH encourages residents to make a plan, seek support, and take steps toward a tobacco- and nicotine-free life.

Local health data shows that tobacco and nicotine use are increasing concerns in Greene County. According to the 2026 Greene County Community Health Assessment, ***18% of survey respondents reported smoking cigarettes in the past 30 days, up from 10% in the 2022 assessment. E-cigarette use also increased, with 17% reporting use in the past 30 days, compared with 6% in 2022.***

These findings highlight the importance of continued education, prevention, and access to resources that help people quit. Cigarette smoking remains the leading preventable cause of disease, disability, and death in the United States, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Smoking increases the risk of cancer, heart disease, stroke, and lung disease.

For more than 50 years, the American Cancer Society has sponsored the Great American Smokeout® on the third Thursday in November. The event encourages people to make a plan to quit smoking and take steps toward a healthier, smoke-free future.

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The American Cancer Society offers **Empowered to Quit**, a free email-based program that helps people prepare for a quit date, manage cravings, and stay motivated. Participants receive personalized tips, reminders, and helpful tools throughout their quitting journey. Learn more at **cancer.org/empoweredtoquit**.

Quitting smoking has health benefits that begin almost immediately. According to the CDC:

- **Within minutes:** Your heart rate drops.
- **Within 24 hours:** The nicotine level in your blood drops to zero.
- **Within several days:** The carbon monoxide level in your blood drops to the level of someone who does not smoke.
- **Within 1 to 12 months:** Coughing and shortness of breath decrease.
- **Over time:** Your risk of heart disease, stroke, and several types of cancer decreases.

In addition to quitting smoking, some people may benefit from regular lung cancer screenings. The American Cancer Society recommends yearly lung cancer screening with a low-dose CT scan for people ages 50 to 80 who currently smoke or have smoked in the past and have a smoking history of at least 20 pack-years. A 20 pack-year history could mean smoking one pack a day for 20 years or two packs a day for 10 years. Talk with your health care provider to determine whether screening is right for you.

Greene County Public Health encourages residents who want to quit to take advantage of the free resources and support available. The American Cancer Society offers information and guidance at **cancer.org/smokeout** or by calling **1-800-227-2345**.

“At Greene County Public Health, we want everyone in our community to have the opportunity to live healthier lives,” said Laurie Fox, Public Information Officer. “The latest Community Health Assessment shows that tobacco and e-cigarette use have increased locally. During this year's Great American Smokeout®, we encourage residents to take that first step toward quitting and to support friends, family members, and coworkers working toward a tobacco- and nicotine-free life. Every step counts!”

If you're ready to quit, help is available. Call Ohio's Tobacco Quit Line at **1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669)** or visit quitforlife.com/ohio to connect with free support and resources to help you develop a quit plan.

For more information about Greene County Public Health, visit **www.greenecophoh.gov** or call **937-374-5600**.

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