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How to Stay Quit After the Great American Smokeout? Try 'The Magic of Mondays'

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NEW YORK, Nov. 16, 2010 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- Thousands of smokers will quit this Thursday, November 18th, with the American Cancer Society's Great American Smokeout. But many will relapse by Christmas and will need to quit several times before quitting for good. The Monday Campaigns, a nonprofit initiative backed by leading public health schools, says Smokeout quitters can stay on track by using Monday as the day to recommit and re-quit if they relapse.

"The magic of Mondays has worked for millions around the world to help them cut down on meat for their health and the health of the planet," says Sid Lerner, Chairman of the Monday Campaigns. Meatless Monday, which the Washington Post called "a movement with legs," has attracted the support of celebrity chefs like Mario Batali, schools, colleges, companies, and is now in twelve countries worldwide.

"That same weekly behavior nudge that drives the success of Meatless Monday can help smokers to kick their habit, too, and keep it kicked," says Dr. Robert Lawrence, Director of The Center for a Livable Future, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. Fran Stillman, Co-Director of the Institute for Global Tobacco Control, says "studies show a high relapse rate for most first-time quitters and it takes multiple attempts for most smokers to quit for good. The idea of using each Monday as the day for quitters to reaffirm their smoke cessation goal is a sensible way to stay on track."

The National Cancer Institute (NCI) has incorporated the Monday idea into its Smokefree Women program. NCI's women.smokefree.gov website says "Smokefree Mondays help you stay focused on quitting by renewing your commitment to a life without cigarettes every week. Every Monday is a chance to reflect on your reasons for quitting, celebrate your progress, and make a fresh start if you have slipped."

"Monday is the January of the week," says Monday Campaigns President, Peggy Neu. "Our research shows that people see Monday as the day for a fresh start and are more likely to start diets, exercise regimens and quit smoking on Monday than any other day. It's a natural restart day to change old bad habits into positive new ones, or to get back on the wagon if you've fallen off."

Donald Distasio, Chief Executive Officer of the American Cancer Society, Eastern Division says, "We hope many more smokers will use the Great American Smokeout as an important first step towards living a smoke-free life. Stay Quit Monday is a good tool for smokers to use in reinforcing their commitment to quitting. If you're looking to quit smoking, call your American Cancer Society at 1-800-ACS-2345 or visit www.cancer.org. We can help."

The Monday Campaigns (www.mondaycampaigns.org) is a project of Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health and Syracuse University Newhouse School of Public Communications.

Quit and Stay Quit Monday Resources

- Visit the Monday Campaigns www.mondaycampaigns.org for free resources on using Monday to promote a range of health behaviors
- Call your American Cancer Society at 1-800-ACS-2345 or visit www.cancer.org
- Take the Smokefree Monday pledge at www.women.smokefree.gov and visit www.smokefree.gov for additional resources
- Call 1-800-Quit-Now, the national tobacco quitline, to talk with counselors and get referrals to local resources

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