



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: What services does the Helpline offer?

A: The Helpline offers free telephone counseling, self-help materials, and referral to local resources. Clients requesting counseling receive up to six sessions with a counselor on a proactive basis. The Helpline is funded by tobacco taxes, through the California Department of Health Services and First 5 California and is operated out of the Moores Cancer Center at the University of California, San Diego.

Q: What languages and specialized services does the Helpline offer?

A: Helpline services are available in: English, Chinese (Mandarin and Cantonese), Korean, Spanish, and Vietnamese as well as a TDD line for the deaf and hard of hearing. There are also specialized services for teens, pregnant women, and tobacco chewers.

Q: How effective are Helpline services?

A: The Helpline has been scientifically proven in clinical trials to double a smoker's chances of successfully quitting.

Q: Does the Helpline provide NRT or other FDA-approved cessation medications?

A: No, but the Helpline does work with Medi-Cal, Medicare and county health enrollees to utilize their benefits. Medi-Cal and county health programs provide FREE pharmacotherapy for enrollees who participate in a behavior modification program, such as the Helpline, and have a prescription from their doctor. Medicare covers some pharmacotherapy and reimburses for provider counseling. The Helpline counselors assist all clients with their questions regarding quitting aids. For more information visit www.nobutts.org/quittingaids.shtml.

Q: What hours does the Helpline operate?

A: Counselors are available Monday through Friday from 7 AM to 9 PM and on Saturday from 9 AM to 1 PM. If clients call after hours, they have the option of leaving a message and/or listening to a number of automated messages on topics such as the benefits of quitting, use of quitting aids, and information for pregnant callers.

Q: Who should call the Helpline?

A: Anyone wanting to quit smoking or chewing tobacco. In addition, family and friends of tobacco users can receive information to help a family member or friend quit.

Q: Why should a smoker who wants to quit call the Helpline?

A: Quitting smoking is the single most important action a person can take to improve his or her health. The Helpline has been proven in clinical trials to double a smoker's chances of successfully quitting. The service is free, confidential, and convenient.

Q: For most smokers, it is very difficult to quit smoking. Do you have any words of encouragement?

A: It often takes many tries, but it is possible to quit. Currently there are more former smokers in California than current smokers. Our counselors are well-trained, caring, and non-judgmental and will help clients set up a personalized plan for quitting.

Q: What is the process when someone calls the Helpline? What can a caller expect?

A: Clients are asked some questions to determine their needs and are given a choice of services—materials and/or counseling. If clients choose counseling, they are given the option of beginning counseling immediately or scheduling an appointment to be called back at another time. The initial session lasts on average 40 minutes. After the initial call, the counselor will provide as many as five additional counseling sessions at the caller's convenience.

Q: What credentials/experience do the Helpline counselors have?

A: Counselors at the Helpline have a range of educational backgrounds from bachelor's degrees through master's degrees in psychology, social work, or other health-related fields. Regardless of educational background and counseling experience, all counselors complete a 48-hour in-house training program and a one-month apprenticeship at the Helpline. A licensed psychologist oversees all clinical work.

Q: Where can I find more information about the Helpline?

A: The Helpline's web site at www.nobutts.org provides information for individuals wanting to quit, as well as information for health professionals who want to refer smokers to the Helpline, including an online order form for free promotional materials.