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## WANNA KICK SOME BUTT? SMOKING CESSATION CLASSES CAN HELP

**By Spc. Todd Goodman**  
Landstuhl Regional Medical Center

**LANDSTUHL, Germany** — Healthy lungs and smoking go together like ketchup on ice cream. That's why October is Healthy Lung Month and the Great American Smoke Out is in November.

For those in the military community who want to "de-ketchup their ice cream" by quitting smoking, a smoking cessation class can help.



The Wellness Center at Landstuhl

Regional Medical Center offers a seven-week Freedom from Smoking program designed by the American Lung Association. Participants attend a one-hour class each week, which initially focuses on education before moving on to the hard stuff.

"The class teaches them about their smoking habit," said Joyce Patrick, director of the Wellness Center. "So much of smoking revolves around the smoker's habits, not necessarily around the actual nicotine addiction."

Some of the more common smoking habits include having a smoke:

- with coffee in the morning coffee;
- with an evening beer or while sitting at the bar with friends;
- while driving;
- after a meal;
- to help calm the nerves;
- to combat boredom

“Breaking the habit often is as hard as breaking the addiction,” said Patrick. “We can help anyone conquer his addiction to smoking, but they have to work hard to break the habit. Learning what triggers a person’s urge to smoke is a big step in learning how to control that urge.”

Once the triggers are discovered, it’s time to tackle the nicotine addiction. This is controlled by using a medication called Zyban, which curbs the psychological portion of the cravings. The medication makes a smoker feel full, like someone who has just polished off an entire buffet then thinks about dessert. Sure, he would like a piece of blueberry cheesecake, but his feelings of fullness outweigh his desire for the cake.

“Once the medication takes effect, we help people plan for how they will remain tobacco-free once the classes are over and the medication runs out,” she said. “Having a plan is important, because you don’t take medication forever. You shouldn’t need to.”

The plan focuses on managing life situations through meditation and the power of positive thinking. There also are follow-up visits at intervals of one, three and six months. Six months of being “smoke-free” is considered success, because the smoke should have conquered his habits and the nicotine addiction by that time.

However, Patrick said it is important that smokers not get discouraged if it takes several times to successfully give up the habit.

“Trying three or four times to quit is not unusual,” she said. “That does not surprise us. We talk about readiness to change. Lots of people show up just wanting to get the medication because they think it will make quitting easy, right then and there. Those people are not ready to stop smoking.”

“When anyone is ready to quit, we are here to help them,” she said. “It’s not an easy process. Quitting is hard. But people quit all of the time.”

Classes are now scheduled through December 2005, with plenty of space available for anyone looking to give up smoking. For more information, call Patrick at 486-8614 or 06371-86-8614.

