

## CDC Continues *Tips From Former Smokers* Campaign



In high school, Terrie was a cheerleader who competed on the North Carolina cheer circuit. Because a lot of her friends smoked, Terrie soon found herself lighting up in social settings. Eventually, she was smoking up to two packs of cigarettes a day. In 2001, at 40, Terrie was diagnosed with oral cancer and with throat cancer. When doctors told her that they would need to remove her larynx, she finally quit smoking for good. Today, Terrie speaks with the aid of an artificial voice box inserted in her throat. She continues to battle cancer, even now.

Terrie is one of several people who share their stories as part of CDC's national tobacco education campaign, *Tips From Former Smokers (Tips)*. Sharing experiences such as Terrie's is a powerful way to communicate the risks of smoking and the harsh reality of the health problems that can occur.

Beginning with the publication of the first Surgeon General's report nearly 50 years ago, we have learned that smoking causes a wide variety of severe health problems. Cigarette smoking and exposure to secondhand smoke result in more than 443,000 deaths a year in this country and are also among the main causes of early disability. For every person who dies from smoking, another 20 suffer from illnesses related to smoking, such as COPD (a group of respiratory diseases that include emphysema and chronic bronchitis), and asthma. Smoking can also make other health conditions—such as diabetes—much worse.

Smoking rates have declined since the first Surgeon General's report was released in 1964, but the decline has leveled off in recent years. As Dr. Tim McAfee, director of the Office of Smoking and Health at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said, "It has been challenging to make progress in getting people to quit smoking in the last several years."

That's why in 2012 CDC launched the *Tips From Former Smokers* campaign. The *Tips* campaign focused on people with health problems caused by smoking or exposure to secondhand smoke.

The effect of the campaign was immediate and intense. Compared with the same 12-week period in 2011, overall call volume to 1-800-QUIT-NOW (which provides free counseling to help smokers quit) more than doubled during the *Tips* campaign, and visits to the Web site ([www.smokefree.gov](http://www.smokefree.gov)) increased by more than five times.

CDC is expanding on the first *Tips* campaign by airing new ads in 2013. Dr. McAfee said, "We wanted to address additional health conditions and population groups that weren't represented in the first *Tips* campaign. We're confident that we can get more smokers to quit and more nonsmokers to encourage a loved one to quit for good."

In the new round of television commercials, Terrie is featured again, along with seven new participants: Michael, Nathan, Tiffany, Bill, Ellie, Jamason, and Mariano. The *Tips* campaign will include TV, radio, billboard and digital ads, and public service announcements.

All of the people featured in the campaign hope their stories will help other smokers quit. As one participant put it, "Make a list. Put the people you love at the top. Put down your eyes, your legs, your kidneys, and your heart. Now cross off all the things you're OK with losing because you'd rather smoke."

For more information about the *Tips* campaign and resources for quitting smoking, visit [www.cdc.gov/tips](http://www.cdc.gov/tips). For help quitting, call 1-800-QUIT-NOW.