

Great American Smokeout®

November 15, 2018

Communications Toolkit



Welcome

Since 1976, the American Cancer Society has hosted the [Great American Smokeout® \(GASO\)](#), a public awareness event to encourage people to quit smoking. GASO is celebrated on the third Thursday of November. The American Cancer Society's 43rd annual GASO will be celebrated on Thursday, November 15. Organizations across the country use GASO to encourage their patients, employees, customers, community members, partners and other key audiences to take action to quit smoking. Individuals similarly take advantage of GASO to support family members and friends in quitting smoking.

The theme for GASO 2018 is "*Day 1*". This theme was selected to reflect what we know about smoking cessation. That quitting smoking isn't easy. It takes time. And a plan. GASO isn't necessarily the day for smokers to quit smoking, but rather the day for smokers to start their journey toward a smoke-free life. The American Cancer Society is here to provide resources and support to help smokers quit smoking for good.

The American Cancer Society offers this toolkit to help you implement the Great American Smokeout® within your organization. The Toolkit includes campaign tips, messages, tools and links to resources to help you encourage your patients, employees, customers and community members to use November 15, 2018, as the day to start a plan to live a smoke-free life.

We appreciate your support and partnership. We know the people who are influenced by your organization's efforts to support healthy, smoke-free lives will appreciate the benefits for many years to come.

Table of Contents

Campaign Tips	3
Key Messages	4
Resource and Material List.....	6
Email Messages	6
Press Release/Article	7
Social Media Messages	8

Campaign Tips

The American Cancer Society encourages you to implement the Great American Smokeout® event in the ways that are the most meaningful for your organization. Throughout the years, we have seen amazing campaigns that bring people together, educate them about healthy living, and encourage and support those who smoke to take the steps to end the addiction for good.

Below are some suggested tactics and tips that you can use to promote the Great American Smokeout® event in your organization and community.

Internal and On-Site Communications

1. **Internal Leadership Announcement** – Engage your leadership to kick off the campaign and to demonstrate your organization’s commitment to healthy, smoke-free living. Use the E-mail Message found on page 6 of this toolkit to send to staff and others.
2. **Staff Wellness Programs** – Integrate the Great American Smokeout® event into your staff wellness programs. Visit quit cards, TV PSAs and radio PSAs.
3. **Staff as Smoking Cessation Advocates** – Prepare staff with messaging so they can serve as advocates and spokespersons for smoking cessation. Use the key messaging found on page 4 of this toolkit.
4. **Message to Staff Smokers** – Encourage staff who smoke to make a plan to quit. Use the Message for Smokers found on page 6 of this toolkit.
5. **Intranet Posts** – Post a series of messages, information and resources on your intranet to promote healthy, smoke-free living.
6. **Staff Meetings** – Use meetings as an opportunity to discuss and encourage healthy, smoke-free living.
7. **Staff Email Series** – Send a series of emails reinforcing various aspects of healthy, smoke-free living.
8. **Staff Newsletters** – Write an article for a staff newsletter to promote healthy, smoke-free living. Use the Press Release/Article found at the end of this toolkit.
9. **Posters, Flyers, Table Tents and Cards** – Place Great American Smokeout® event posters, flyers, table tents and cards in visible locations where employees, customers and other key audiences can pick them up. Visit cancer.org/smokeout to download American Cancer Society resources including flyers, posters, print ads, and quit cards.

External Communications

1. **External Announcement** – Engage your external partners and announce your organization’s participation in the Great American Smokeout® event and your commitment to their healthy, smoke-free lives. Use the E-mail Message found at the end of this toolkit to send to key partners.

2. **Press Release** – Put out a press release announcing your organization’s participation in the Great American Smokeout® event. Use the Press Release/Article found at the end of this tool kit.
3. **Website Information** – Post information on your organization’s website about the Great American Smokeout® event and your commitment to healthy, smoke-free lives and share American Cancer Society resources to help people make a plan to quit tobacco.
4. **Partner Emails Series** – Send a series of emails reinforcing various aspects of healthy, smoke-free living.
5. **Newsletters** – Publish an article in your organization’s print or digital patient newsletter. Use the Press Release/Article found on page 7 of this toolkit.
6. **Social Media** – Post on social media about your organization’s participation in Great American Smokeout® event and share tips to help employees, customers and other key audiences lead healthy, smoke-free lives. Use the Social Media Messages found on page 8 of this toolkit to customize and post messages.

Key Messages

Great American Smokeout

- The American Cancer Society’s 43rd annual Great American Smokeout® (GASO) event will be celebrated on Thursday, November 15, 2018.
- GASO is an opportunity for everyone to commit to healthy, smoke-free lives – not just for a day, but year-round.
- The theme for GASO 2018 is “*Day 1*”. This theme was selected to reflect what we know about smoking cessation. That quitting smoking isn’t easy. It takes time. And a plan. GASO isn’t necessarily the day for smokers to quit smoking, but rather the day for smokers to start their journey toward a smoke-free life. And, the American Cancer Society is here to provide resources and support to help smokers quit smoking for good.
- GASO provides an opportunity for individuals, community groups, businesses, health care providers, and others to encourage people to use the date to make a plan to quit, or plan in advance and initiate a smoking cessation plan on the day of GASO.
- Encourage someone you know to make a plan to quit, or plan in advance and initiate a smoking cessation plan on the Great American Smokeout® event, November 15, 2018.

Smoking and Tobacco

- Cigarette smoking is the leading cause of cancer death in the United States, accounting for 29% of all cancer deaths.
- Cigarette smoking kills about half of all long-term smokers. Each year, an estimated 480,000 people in the United States die from illnesses caused by smoking. This means that each year, smoking causes about 1 out of 5 deaths in the US. In fact, smoking cigarettes kills more Americans than alcohol, car accidents, HIV, guns, and illegal drugs combined.
- Smoking not only causes cancer. It can damage nearly every organ in the body, including the lungs, heart, blood vessels, reproductive organs, mouth, skin, eyes, and bones.

- While cigarette smoking rates have significantly dropped (from 42% in 1965 to 14% in 2017), about 34 million Americans smoke cigarettes.
- Each year, approximately 20 million American smokers try to quit, representing more than half of the 42 million smokers in the U.S. Only about 1.4 million (7%) succeed. An even greater percentage of smokers (68%) report being interested in quitting.
- Cigarettes are the most harmful tobacco products. Cigarettes burn tobacco, a process that yields an estimated 7,000 chemicals, including at least 70 chemicals that cause cancer. While nicotine is responsible for addicting users, it is the smoke from the burning of tobacco, not nicotine, that injures and kills millions of smokers.
- There are many products that burn tobacco, including cigarettes, roll-your-own, cigars, pipe tobacco, bidis, kreteks, and hookah tobacco.
- There is no safe level of exposure to tobacco smoke. Any exposure to tobacco smoke – even an occasional cigarette or exposure to secondhand smoke – is harmful.

Smoking Cessation for Smokers

- If you are a smoker, the most important thing you can do to improve your health is to quit smoking.
- Addiction to nicotine in cigarettes is one of the strongest and most deadly addictions one can have.
- Quitting is hard for many people who smoke. It takes commitment and starts with a plan, often takes more than one quit attempt, and requires a lot of support. Often, the younger one is when s/he starts to smoke, the more intense the addiction.
- Smokers are strongly advised to use proven cessation methods, such as prescription medications and counseling, or a combination of both, to quit smoking. It's a good idea to talk to your doctor or pharmacist to get their advice.
- Support is also important. Smoking cessation programs, telephone quit lines, the American Cancer Society's Freshstart program, Nicotine Anonymous meetings, self-help materials such as books and pamphlets, and smoking counselors or coaches can be a great help.
- You should also tell family, friends, and co-workers that you are trying to quit. Someone who feels supported is more likely to quit smoking for good. Talk to your significant others about how they can best support you in your effort to become smoke-free.
- Quitting may not be easy, but you can do it and the American Cancer Society can help. The American Cancer Society is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to provide support, from answering questions about quitting smoking to finding national or local resources to help you quit. To find out more, visit cancer.org/smokeout or call 1-800-227-2345.
- For free social support on Facebook, please "like" the American Cancer Society's Quit For Life page.
- The Quit For Life program is a phone-based coaching and web-based learning support service to help smokers quit. It's offered by 25 states and more than 700 employers and health plans throughout the US. Visit quitnow.net to learn more about the Quit For Life program and see if you qualify.

Smoking Cessation for Friends and Family of Smokers

- If someone you know smokes or uses tobacco, encourage them to make a plan to quit and seek help.

- The nicotine in cigarettes and other tobacco products is very addictive, and quitting is hard for many people who use tobacco products.
- Having support can make all the difference for someone who is trying to quit, so make sure your friends and family know how much you support them every step of the way.
- If you know someone who smokes cigarettes or uses other tobacco products, ask them to seek support by contacting the American Cancer Society at 1.800.227.2345 or visiting cancer.org/smokeout.

Resources and Material List

The American Cancer Society provides materials for you to use to promote the Great American Smokeout® event. The materials can be found on cancer.org/smokeout.

- Poster, 11" x 17" English & Spanish
- Flyer, 8.5" x 11" English & Spanish
- Print Ads
- Table Tent
- Quit Cards
- GASO Badge
- GASO Stickers

Email Message

[ORGANIZATION] is proud to participate in the American Cancer Society's 43rd annual Great American Smokeout® event on Thursday, November 15. We encourage our [PATIENTS, EMPLOYEES, CUSTOMERS, COMMUNITY MEMBERS AND OTHER KEY AUDIENCES] to commit or recommit to healthy, smoke-free lives – not just for a day, but year around.

Most of us know all too well the devastating impact tobacco can have on people's health. Cigarette smoking is the leading cause of cancer death in the United States, accounting for 29% of all cancer deaths. Yet, 34 million American adults still smoke. The most important thing smokers can do to improve their health is to quit smoking.

At the same time, we know addiction to nicotine in cigarettes is one of the strongest and most deadly addictions one can have. Quitting is hard. It takes commitment and starts with a plan, often takes more than one quit attempt, and requires a lot of support. Getting help through counseling and/or prescription medications can double or triple the chances of quitting successfully. Our colleagues at the American Cancer Society are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to provide support while you attempt to quit. To find out more, visit cancer.org/smokeout or call 1-800-227-2345.

[ORGANIZATION] wants you to be healthy and happy. During this year's Great American Smokeout® event, we hope you will join us – and encourage your friends, family and colleagues to join us – in committing or recommitting to year-around, smoke-free lives.

Email Message for Smokers

I am writing today about a very important health topic – smoking. Today our [ORGANIZATION] is proud to participate in the American Cancer Society's 43rd annual Great American Smokeout® event. We use this event

to encourage [PATIENTS, EMPLOYEES, CUSTOMERS, OTHER KEY AUDIENCES] to commit or recommit to healthy, smoke-free lives – not just for a day, but year around.

The most important thing you can do to improve your health is to quit smoking. We know addiction to nicotine in cigarettes is one of the strongest and most deadly addictions one can have. Quitting is hard. It takes commitment and starts with a plan, often takes more than one quit attempt, and requires a lot of support. Getting help through counseling and/or medications can double or triple your chances of quitting successfully.

[ORGANIZATION] wants you to be healthy and happy. We encourage you to use the Great American Smokeout® event as the day you take your first step toward becoming smoke-free. The American Cancer Society is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to provide support, from the first steps of making a plan to living a healthy, smoke-free life. I hope you will visit cancer.org/smokeout or call 1-800-227-2345 to find out more.

Press Release / Article

[ORGANIZATION] encourages smokers to make a plan to quit smoking during the American Cancer Society's Great American Smokeout®

The 43rd Annual Great American Smokeout® is November 15, 2018

[ORGANIZATION] is encouraging [PATIENTS, EMPLOYEES, CUSTOMERS, OTHER KEY AUDIENCES] to commit or recommit to healthy, smoke-free lives by participating in the American Cancer Society's 43rd Great American Smokeout® event on November 15, 2018.

“The most important thing smokers can do to improve their health is to quit smoking cigarettes and other forms of combustible tobacco,” said [EXECUTIVE NAME AND TITLE]. “We are showing our support for people who take those first steps toward making a plan to quit.”

Cigarette smoking is the leading cause of cancer death in the United States, accounting for 29% of all cancer deaths. In fact, smoking cigarettes kills more Americans than alcohol, car accidents, HIV, guns, and illegal drugs combined. Smoking not only causes cancer. It damages nearly every organ in the body, including the lungs, heart, blood vessels, reproductive organs, mouth, skin, eyes, and bones.

Addiction to nicotine in cigarettes is one of the strongest and most deadly addictions one can have. While cigarette smoking rates have dropped (from 42% in 1965 to 14% in 2017), about 42 million Americans smoke cigarettes. Each year, approximately 20 million American smokers try to quit, representing more than half of the 42 million smokers in the U.S. Only about 1.4 million (7%) succeed. An even greater percentage of smokers (68%) report being interested in quitting.

Quitting is hard. It takes commitment and starts with a plan, often takes more than one quit attempt, and requires a lot of support. Getting help through counseling and/or prescription medications can double or triple your chances of quitting successfully. Support is also important. Smoking cessation programs, telephone quit lines, the American Cancer Society's Freshstart program, Nicotine Anonymous meetings, self-help materials such as books and pamphlets, and smoking counselors or coaches can be a great help.

[ORGANIZATION] is partnering with the American Cancer Society, which is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, to provide support as people make their plan to quit. More information is available at cancer.org/smokeout or by calling 1-800-227-2345.

"[ORGANIZATION] wants to help the people in our community [OR INSERT TARGET DEMOGRAPHIC] to be healthy and happy," said [EXECUTIVE NAME AND TITLE]. "During this year's Great American Smokeout® event, we hope everyone will join us – and encourage their friends, family and colleagues to join us – in committing or recommitting to year-around, smoke-free lives."

Social Media Messages

The following are short messages specific to the Great American Smokeout® event that you may use or customize on social media:

- During Great American Smokeout®, join @AmericanCancer and commit or recommit to living a smoke-free life. Learn more at cancer.org/smokeout or call 1-800-227-2345. #greatamericansmokeout
- Is it time for you to quit smoking? @AmericanCancer can help. Learn more at cancer.org/smokeout or call 1-800-227-2345. #greatamericansmokeout
- It's the Great American Smokeout®! Let today be the day that you make a commitment to start the journey toward a smoke-free life. @AmericanCancer can help. Visit cancer.org/smokeout or call 1-800-227-2345. #greatamericansmokeout
- Cigarette smoking is the leading cause of cancer death in the United States. @AmericanCancer can help smokers quit. To learn more, visit cancer.org/smokeout or call 1-800-227-2345. #greatamericansmokeout
- Quitting smoking isn't easy. It takes commitment and starts with a plan. Having support can make all the difference. Learn more at cancer.org/smokeout or call 1-800-227-2345. #greatamericansmokeout
- Are you thinking about quitting smoking? Take the first step today. Find out how by visiting cancer.org/smokeout or calling 1-800-227-2345. #greatamericansmokeout