

Publication: BURLINGTON; Date:Sunday, JAN 01, 2006; Section:Region; Page 1

# New hotline helps smokers quit

## Free phone call gives advice and support

By **Brandee Hayhurst** Times-News

"Quit coaches" are standing at the ready for what they hope will be a steady stream of calls.

But even if you're not ready to throw out your cigarettes on Jan. 1, the state's toll-free tobacco quitline is here to stay.

North Carolina quietly launched 1-800-QUIT-NOW in the middle of November.

Now they're up to full capacity and ready to take calls between 8 a.m. and midnight every day. Doctors also can refer their patients to the quitline.

"There's a strong desire to quit, but the nicotine in tobacco's so addictive it's difficult to quit without assistance," said Kurt Ward, who works with the Alamance-Caswell Mental Health office. "It's also a huge advantage that it's free."

Not only is the call itself free, but smokers and tobacco users also get advice and support at no cost. Coaches can tailor a tobacco cessation plan to each individual and call those trying to kick the habit to check on their progress.

Experts say that people who use coaches are more likely to succeed. And although the difference is not huge, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says studies consistently show that 2.6 percent more people succeed in quitting due to a quitline.

The quitline is funded by the N.C. Health and Wellness Trust Fund and the N.C. Division of Public Health.

For more information on the dangers of tobacco use and on how to quit, visit the Web site at [www.quitnownc.org](http://www.quitnownc.org)

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