



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CONTACT:

Jill Blake, Program Manager (530) 538-6464

Smoke-Free From the Start

With the holidays approaching, First 5 Butte County would like to encourage all parents and caregivers to be smoke-free. The dangers of smoking are well-known. It is addictive, can cause cancer, has an unpleasant odor and is harmful to friends and family. Children are especially vulnerable to secondhand smoke because they are still growing and developing.

Smoking attributes to 342,000 deaths from lung cancer in this country each year and 35 million Americans suffer from chronic lung disease, according to the American Lung Association. Smoking doesn't just harm the smoker. Infants and children exposed to secondhand smoke have difficulty breathing and are more likely to get colds or suffer from pneumonia, bronchitis and other lung diseases or develop asthma or allergies. Every year an estimated 150,000 to 300,000 children under 18 months of age get ear infections as a result of exposure to secondhand smoke.

What better way to celebrate the holiday season than by giving yourself and those you care about the gift of smoking cessation? Three out of four California smokers say they would like to stop smoking but First 5 Butte County realizes that it is not easy to quit. We offer the following helpful tips to those new and expectant parents and caregivers interested in kicking the habit:

- Get support – let your friends and family know you are quitting.
- Make a list of reasons of why you want to quit.
- Set a quit-date. The sooner the better.

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- Ask for smoking cessation materials and read them.
- Nicotine patches or gum, other medications, herbs or acupuncture can help.
- Wait out the urge to smoke – it will pass.
- Some people find it easier to stop all at once; others give up one cigarette each day until they're down to none.
- Find something healthy to chew on when you feel like smoking. Raw vegetables make a great low-calorie snack.

Parents who quit smoking should not only do it for their health but also for the health of their child. Remember, your choices shape their chances. If you or someone you love needs help to quit smoking, call the California Smoker's Helpline at (800) NO-BUTTS or (800) 662-8887.

About First 5 Butte County Children and Families Commission

Research shows that a child's brain develops most dramatically in the first five years and what parents and caregivers do during these years to support their child's growth will have a meaningful impact throughout life. Based on this research, California voters passed Proposition 10 in 1998, adding a 50 cents-per-pack tax on cigarettes to support programs for expectant parents and children ages 0 to 5. First 5 Butte County Children and Families Commission distributes approximately \$2 million a year in Prop. 10 revenues to programs and services that meet local needs.

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