

Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SAFE Glen Cove Coalition: CDC Identified Smokers Are at Higher Risk for Covid-19

In their continuing partnership's mission to keep the community apprised and informed of strategies to live a substance free healthy lifestyle Glen Cove SAFE and the Tobacco Action Coalition of LI (TAC) wanted to share this timely update from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) on risk factors for Covid-19.

The CDC maintains a list of underlying medical conditions which is not exclusive, but includes many of the conditions with sufficient evidence to draw conclusions of who are at increased risk for severe illness from the virus that causes COVID-19. According to the CDC they are learning more about COVID-19 every day, and have recently added smoking to that list. Severe illness is defined as consistent evidence from multiple small studies or a strong association from a large study. Severe illness from COVID-19 is defined as hospitalization, admission to the ICU, intubation or mechanical ventilation, or death. As it is a living document that keeps evolving with more research and scientific data it may be updated at any time. This list is only meant to inform individuals as to what their level of risk may be so they can make individual decisions about illness prevention.

In light of the recent inclusion of smoking by the CDC, the SAFE Glen Cove Coalition and its longtime educational resource partner, TAC-Manager, Carol Meschkow would like to remind the Community, that it is even more critical now than ever to make our youth aware of the dangers of tobacco products and good lung health. The message is clear; the harmful impact of smoking on the lungs has been researched and documented for years, and there is conclusive evidence that smoking increases the risk for respiratory infections, weakens the immune system, and is a major cause of a number of chronic health conditions.

Smoking causes harm to the lungs, leaving lung tissue inflamed, fragile and more susceptible to infection according to Dr. Brian Christman- Professor of Medicine at Vanderbilt University and volunteer spokesperson for the American Lung Association, “Covid-19 creates an added sense of urgency, and there's ample reason to believe that Quitting smoking during the pandemic could increase your odds of fighting off the virus”. Besides lung-related issues, smoking cessation can also deliver healthy benefits to the heart that could help stave off the possibility of cardiac arrest.

The CDC recommends the following measures to reduce your risk of getting COVID-19:

- Practice Social Distancing.
- Wear a mask in all public and indoor activities.
- Keep these items on hand and use them when venturing out: a mask, tissues, and a hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- Try to engage in outdoor activities when possible, if not feasible, make sure the room or space is well-ventilated
- Clean and disinfect commonly touched surfaces and any shared items between uses.

Call your healthcare provider if you have any concerns about your underlying medical conditions or if you get sick and think that you may have COVID-19. If you need emergency help, call 911 right away. If you don't have a healthcare provider, contact your nearest community health center or health department.

Everyone should take steps to prevent getting and spreading COVID-19 to protect themselves, their communities, and people who are at increased risk of severe illness. Stay healthy during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ms. Meschkow emphasizes that from the very first day of someone's Quit attempt they start to reap health benefits to every major organ and system of the body, from one's brain to their DNA. Quitting positively impacts major organs and systems that are essential to help your immune system fight off infection and disease such as; the lungs and circulatory system. Per the CDC, the cilia in your lungs are one of the first parts of your body to heal. These hair-like projections wave back and forth like a brush sweeping as air moves in and out of your lungs. They help your body ward off colds and respiratory infection and help clear mucus. If this process is impeded the mucus can build up in ones lungs.

Quitting smoking and vaping is even more crucial now during the COVID-19 pandemic. If you or a loved one would like more information on the impacts of tobacco and lung health, or would like Cessation/Quit help please contact the NYS Quitline at: 1-866-NY-QUITS or contact the Experts at the American Lung Association Helpline at: 1-800-586-4872.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is a federal agency that conducts and supports health promotion, prevention and preparedness activities in the United States, with the goal of improving overall public health. To learn more about the CDC please visit www.cdc.gov.

To learn more about the SAFE Glen Cove Coalition please follow us on www.facebook.com/safeglencovecoalition or visit SAFE's website to learn more about the COVID-19 Epidemic and its correlation to increased mental illness, alcohol, Tobacco/vaping and substance use at www.safeglencove.org.