

*The greatest decision a person who smokes or uses any form of tobacco can make is to QUIT!*

**1-800-QUIT-NOW**  
**1-800-784-8669**

**NC American Indians**

## What can you do to QUIT?

- Speak to a Spiritual Leader in your community
- Go to a sweatlodge or speak to a Traditional Healer or Medicine Man
- Schedule an appointment to talk to your Doctor about options to quit
- Call QuitlineNC for FREE resources:  
1-800-QUIT-NOW  
1-800-784-8669  
1-877-777-6534 (TTY)

## If you are ready to QUIT, QuitlineNC is a great resource:

- All services are FREE and CONFIDENTIAL (any information collected will not be shared with anyone)
- Trained QUIT tobacco coach will help you make your QUIT plan
- If requested, trained coaches will call you back to provide ongoing support
- Available: 8am-Midnight/7 days a week

*NC Division of Public Health  
Tobacco Prevention & Control Branch*

1932 Mail Service Center

Raleigh, NC 27699

Ph: 919-707-5400

Fax: 919-870-4844

For printable electronic version of brochure go to website:

[www.tobaccopreventionandcontrol.ncdhhs.gov](http://www.tobaccopreventionandcontrol.ncdhhs.gov)



**For other resources, contact:**

*NC Commission of Indian Affairs*

*100 East Six Forks Road, Suite 201*

*Raleigh, NC 27609*

*Ph: 919-789-5900*

*Fax: 919-420-1373*

*Website:*

[www.doa.state.nc.us/cia/index.htm](http://www.doa.state.nc.us/cia/index.htm)

**Funding to print provided by NC Division of  
Public Health, Tobacco Prevention &  
Control Branch**

*NC DHHS is an equal opportunity employer and provider.*  
5,000 copies of this public document were printed at a cost of  
\$645.32 or \$0.129 each. 3/08

*Welcome to*



**1-800-QUIT-NOW (784-8669)**

*the American  
Indian Way*

Open this brochure to find more about:

- Tobacco & History
- Traditional Tobacco
- Spiritual Aspect of Quitting
- Quitting Tips & Resources



**UNC**  
CENTER FOR HEALTH PROMOTION  
AND DISEASE PREVENTION



NC Commission of  
Indian Affairs

## Tobacco & History

There are more than 700 American Indian and Alaskan Native Tribes in the U.S. Each tribe has their distinct culture, practices, traditions, and languages; especially in relation to medicines.

Tobacco is one of many sacred medicines that have been used by American Indian and Alaskan Natives for more than 2000 years. Traditional tobacco's cultural role is to serve as one of the sacred plants given by the Creator, as a communication tool through prayer.

Tribes have different attitudes and beliefs about traditional uses of tobacco. Some have no connection with tobacco.

In North Carolina, tobacco was farmed by NC American Indians because, if they did not use their land "it was taken from them." This is part of the heritage and cultural ways of life today; along with ceremonies.

Manufactured tobacco products are not the same as traditional medicines. These products are used on a daily basis and are not sacred.

~~

***"My daddy was a farmer; everyone smoked. I thought nothing was wrong with it, as it was a tool of survival. Now I realize all the chemicals added to it and it is NOT safe or respectful. It was used to heal the body; now it's used to destroy the body."***

*~ Darlene Graham, Waccamaw-Siouan*

***Quitting is very important for YOU and your family. It's the best thing you can do for your health now and for the future.***

***And there's help 1-800-QUIT-NOW.***

~~

## To QUIT you need to understand: Tobacco as SACRED and SECULAR

Sacred (non-recreational) – the tobacco that grows and is collected in the wild, specifically for ceremonial or medicinal uses. If not used properly with traditional and cultural practices, sacred tobacco can be dangerous.

*Example of Medicinal/Ceremonial uses:*

- Health: lungs, stomach, nose, cuts, wounds, animal/insect bites
- Spiritual: prayer tool, gift, offering

*Example of medicines:*

Mullein, Sweet grass, Cedar, Red Willow Bark, Sage

*Example of traditional tobaccos:*

Cherokee tobacco, Indian tobacco, Desert tobacco

Secular (recreational) - the tobacco that is farmed and manufactured for profit. Manufactured tobacco contains more than 4,000 chemicals when lit. Smokeless forms of tobacco (chew, snuff, dip, and spit) also contain cancer causing agents. Secular (non-ceremonial, non-medicinal) tobacco use is dangerous. This is *not* part of the American Indian culture.

## Our Bodies are Temples: Spiritual Aspect of Quitting

We have been taught that our "bodies are temples". If we corrupt our bodies by using products that harm us, we corrupt our spirit. The health of the body and spirit are uniquely linked together.

***"Each particular aspect is important but perhaps the SPIRITUAL is the most important, as American Indians embrace spirituality."***

*~ Louisa Locklear, Lumbee*

As American Indians, we know our bodies are temporary, but our spirits are eternal. It is ironic that smoking contaminates the soul. In traditional American Indian worship practices, tobacco smoke purifies the mind, body, and the spirit.

Quitting manufactured tobacco products restores life and traditional principles of our American Indian culture.

### When you QUIT:

- **Less wrinkles on your face**
- **Healthier gums and fewer cavities**
- **Breathe better**
- **Less chance of getting Cancers**
- **Children not exposed to secondhand smoke**
- **Live longer for your loved ones**

***"Tobacco cessation is a controversial issue that is multifaceted. We have to keep in mind that tobacco itself is not harmful; but the processing and misuse is what makes it dangerous."***

*~Susan Leading Fox, Eastern Band Cherokee*