

Nurses Corner: November 20,2020

This week's topic was scheduled to be smoking in honor of the Great American Smoke Out on November 19th, however I also wanted to provide a Covid update.

The numbers of Covid cases are rising quickly in our area. The hospitals throughout our state and neighboring states are full. They are often holding people in the emergency room for upwards of 8 hours while waiting for an inpatient bed. There are a lot of nurses out with Covid, which is putting additional strain on the already thin staffing. This is not to say that you shouldn't call an ambulance or go to a hospital in an emergency. If you need emergency care, please seek it!

There has been a lot in the news about staying home for the holidays and only celebrating with your immediate family. For those who feel that they are at low risk for Covid complications, please consider the consequences of gathering with others. Holiday gatherings often mean people of all ages, young and old, coming from different towns and previous exposures, gathering in a home with little to no air circulation. Folks are often eating and drinking and not likely to wear a mask. While most of you will likely be "fine" if you get Covid, not all will be. The hospitals cannot handle an influx of patients after the holidays. Please do your part to help stop the spread so that those that need hospital care can receive the best care possible.

Smoking

We all know that smoking is harmful. It is the largest preventable cause of death and illness in the world. It causes about 1 in 5 deaths. It increases your risk of cancer, heart attacks, stroke, COPD, and many others illnesses. Secondhand smoke is dangerous and can harm the health of your family and friends.

Quitting smoking is a process. It takes time and a plan. Pick a quit date and let others know of your plan. Try to cut down on the number of cigarettes you smoke each day prior to your quit date. Tobacco addiction is both mental and physical. Use the 4 D's to help fight the urge:

- **Delay** for 10 minutes. Repeat if needed.
- **Deep breathe.** Close your eyes, slowly breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth. Picture your lungs filling with fresh, clean air.
- **Drink water** slowly, sip by sip.
- **Do something else.** Some activities trigger cravings. Get up and move around.

To increase your chance of success, reach out for help. Your provider can help provide medications to help with the cravings. Call the American Cancer Society at 1-800-227-2345 or go to <https://www.cancer.org/healthy/stay-away-from-tobacco/guide-quitting-smoking.html> for more resources.