

Physician Completes Training in Smoking Cessation

Tasha Hofmann, DO, a permanent, full-time physician at Rangeley Region Health Center, recently participated in two Center for Tobacco Independence training conferences on tobacco cessation.

“Quitting smoking is the single best lifestyle change a smoker can make to benefit their overall health,” Hofmann emphasizes. Smoking is associated with multiple cancers and heart disease, as well as increased rates of infections.

“Quitting will also improve the health of family members by eliminating their exposure to secondhand smoke,” she adds. Research shows that children exposed to secondhand smoke have more ear infections and respiratory disorders. By quitting, parents also set a good example for their children.

There are many smoking cessation options. The most successful attempts, according to Hofmann, typically couple nicotine replacement therapy, which reduces the physical cravings for nicotine, with a second prescription medication that helps a patient cope with psychological

cravings.

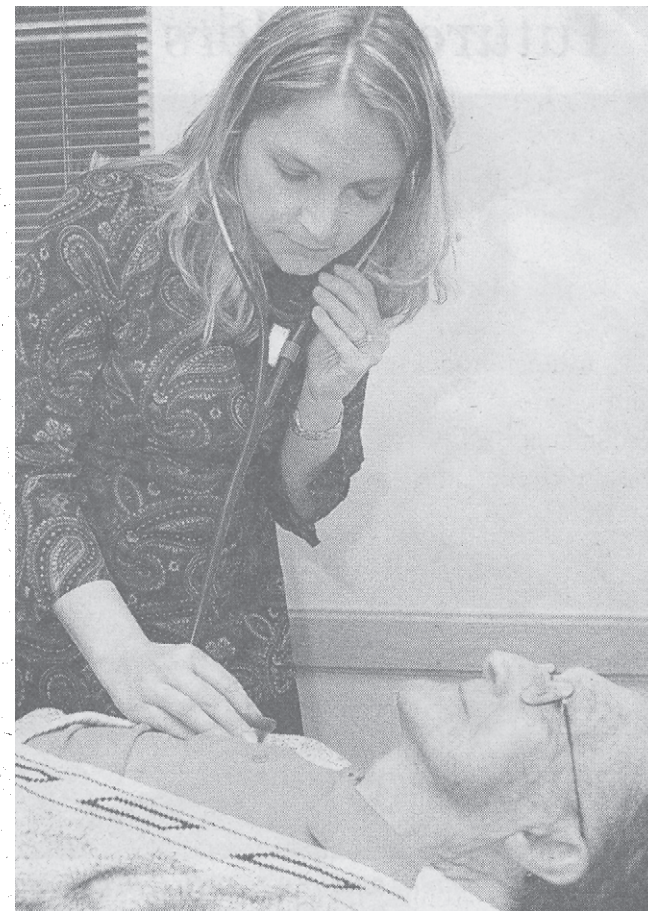
“All successful quit attempts include behavioral modifications such as throwing away cigarettes and ash trays and planning ahead of time for moments or situations during the day which may be difficult,” says Hofmann. It is also important for people to realize that a successful quit often takes multiple attempts, she says. “A smoker who has experienced three or four unsuccessful quits should be encouraged by the fact that just one more attempt could result in the ultimate success.”

According to the American Lung Association, smoking-related diseases claim an estimated 430,700 American lives annually and cost the United States over \$97 billion in health care costs and lost productivity each year.

Hofmann completed both the basic and specialty tobacco cessation training session, and will serve as a resource for other medical providers and clinical staff on this important health issue.

Dr. Hofmann encourages all individuals who wish to stop smoking to work in close partnership with their medical providers.

Free vouchers for nicotine replacement patches and gum are available to patients of all HealthReach Community Health Centers including the Rangeley site, as well as the Strong Area Health Center, Western Maine Family Center in Livermore Falls, and Mt. Abram Regional Health Center in Kingfield.



Quitting smoking is the single best lifestyle change a smoker can make to benefit their overall health says Dr. Tasha Hofmann (above with patient) of the Rangeley Region Health Center.