



# DAVIS COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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## News Release

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## Quit Smoking For Pet's Sake

(Clearfield, Utah) – If you're a smoker who has considered quitting, but don't feel you have a good enough reason yet, consider quitting for the health of your pets. According to public health and animal health officials, many smokers don't realize the ramifications smoking has on their pets.

"Secondhand smoke is just as damaging to your pet's health as it is to a human's health," said Gloria Yugel, a community health educator with the Davis County Health Department. "Exposure to secondhand smoke has been associated with allergies in dogs, eye and skin diseases in birds, lymph gland and oral cancers in cats, nasal and lung cancer in dogs, and respiratory problems in both cats and dogs," she said. Other pets such as rabbits, guinea pigs, or any bird species are no less vulnerable to the dangers of secondhand smoke inhalation.

Yugel said, "A study, carried out by veterinarians in the United States, reached the conclusion that cats – whose owners smoked – were prone to feline lymphoma, a form of cancer that kills 3 out of 4 cats within a year of its diagnosis. The researchers found out that such cats were twice as likely to develop the disease when compared to cats with non-smoking owners." Also, it was discovered that if two people living in the house smoked, the risk for the cat to get cancer was four times greater, she said.

Dogs are similarly endangered by secondhand smoke, said Yugel. "Researchers have established that the development of canine asthma, as well as nasal and lung cancer may be prompted by exposure to secondhand smoke."

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According to Dr. Clayne R. White, a veterinarian at Bayview Animal Hospital in Farmington, “People need to be aware that domesticated pets used to live in the wild and they relied on their heightened sense of smell to survive. Because of this, their nasal membranes are much more sensitive than human’s membranes. Asthma in cats is already a common ailment. We have found that if a cat lives in a home where someone smokes, the cat’s chances of developing asthma are 10 times greater than in a non-smoking household.”

“Also, dogs are at risk so if someone in your household smokes, watch out for your dog coughing, wheezing, or having difficulties breathing,” said White. “Secondhand smoke is particularly dangerous for puppies, which have weaker immune systems and are, therefore, more susceptible to infection.”

Yugel said studies show that more people will attempt to quit smoking for the sake of their dog than for themselves or their children. “Nearly 30 percent of pet owners who smoke would try to quit if they learned that secondhand smoke could harm their pets. Unfortunately, fewer than 2 percent would do so for the sake of their children.”

“In Utah, we have free effective smoking cessation resources available at no cost,” she said. Utah Tobacco Quit Line, **1-800-Quit.Now**, offers telephone counseling from a qualified trained coach who will help the caller develop a personalized quit plan and guide them through the quitting process. “Free FDA approved Nicotine Replacement Therapy is available to eligible callers. Services are available in English and Spanish.”

Utah Quit Net, [www.utahquitnet.com](http://www.utahquitnet.com), offers help creating a personal quit plan, with access to a community of ex-smokers and smokers helping each other to quit and stay quit.

“The pets we love live short enough lives as it is without us having to worry about losing them sooner because of our smoking habit,” said Yugel.

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