

Variety of programs exist to help kick habit

'Mission impossible': quitting smoking

By TRESSA HAYNES
Staff Writer

If you smoke, chances are you've tried to quit a few times. And more than likely, at least once or twice your New Year's Resolution has been to quit smoking (again).

You may consider quitting as Mission Impossible, and you're not alone. The United States Department of Health and Human Services reported that two-thirds of smokers polled in 1987 had seriously tried to quit at least once, and one of every three smokers had tried to quit in the past year. Most smokers have the desire to quit — the hard part is actually doing so.

While it may seem discouraging that nationally 21.5% of college students smoke and 28% of USC students smoke, overall statistics are declining. A survey by the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) showed that from 1985-1989, the number of college-age smokers dropped 6%, and is even lower now.

If the percentage of smokers is dropping, many must be quitting. According to a 1987 study by the American Journal of Public Health, males aged 20-34 had a 30% quit rate and females in the same range had a 27.5% quit rate.

One prime factor in the declining rate of smokers is increased health education awareness. Projects such as the Healthy People 2000 plan are trying to extinguish smoking nationwide. The goal of this plan, which is sponsored by the Surgeon General and the Department of Health and Human Services, is to lower the current smoking prevalence rate of 24.3% to 15% by the year 2000.

The best way to avoid the problem of trying to quit smoking is not to start in the first place. Studies have indicated that most smokers begin

before the age of 17, so early intervention is crucial. Through a joint effort of the American Cancer Society, the American Heart Association and the American Lung Association, over 1800 free educational kits were distributed to fourth grade teachers in South Carolina to help prevent children from starting to smoke in the first place.

Intervention of smoking may also help alleviate illegal drug use. The National Institute of Drug Abuse Study has declared tobacco as a "gateway" drug, which means it may open the door to other drug use. In most cases, smokers are more likely to begin using other drugs than nonsmokers.

It is certainly no secret that smoking is dangerous and unhealthy. Smoking kills more Americans every year than alcohol, drugs, car accidents, fires and AIDS combined.

So if you've decided you really want to quit smoking forever, how do you go about it? If you've previously tried to quit unsuccessfully, you may need some outside help. Perhaps you can find a friend who also wants to quit and commit to helping each other.

If you think you need professional help, you can go to the Open Door Wellness Center in Thomson Health Center (located behind Russell House) to pick up a free "Stop Smoking" packet. For more information on programs in the community, Janet Wessinger, a health educator at DHEC, is available for consultation.

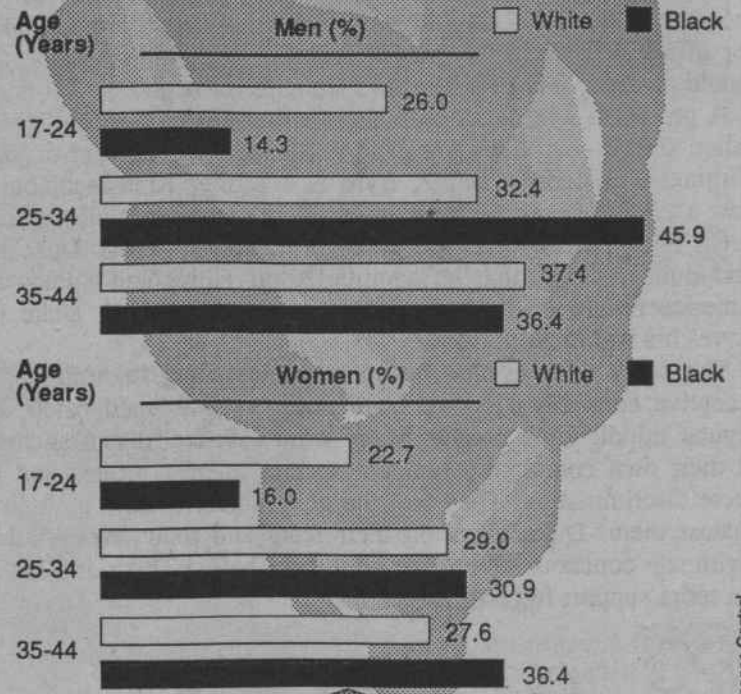
If you smoke and seriously want to quit, get help in deciding on a program that's right for you. And if you don't smoke, vow to help at least one loved one who does smoke to kick the habit once and for all.

Even if you think your lungs are already char-grilled, it's never too late to quit. As soon as you quit, your body starts to repair itself. So, the sooner, the better.

Smoking Facts

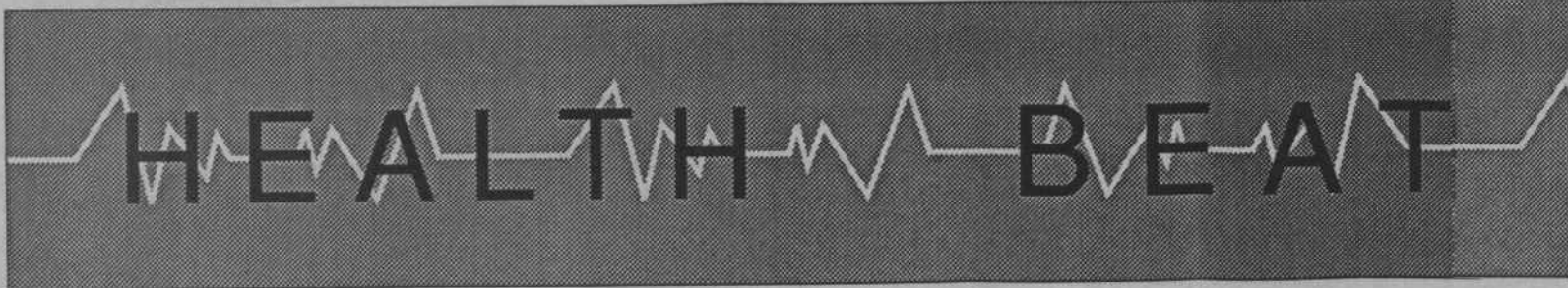
America might be breathing easier these days. The "rate of cigarette smoking in the United States continues to decline" to a "new low of 26.5%" according to the Centers for Disease Control.

Percentage of Current Cigarette Smoking Among Adults



Source: Centers for Disease Control

Ryan Sims/The Gamecock



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"GREENE STREET"
(Rain location in RH Ballroom)
Exhibits * International Food * Dance * Music * Fashion Show * Study Abroad Info

"SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES"

- 10:00 Festival Begins
- 10:30 American Karate Demo
- 10:45 Tae Kwan Do Demo
- 11:00 Greek Singing and Dancing
- 11:30 International Fashion Show
- 11:30 Tae Kwan Do Demo
- 12:00 Drawing for winner of dinner for two at Grecian Gardens
- 12:15 American Karate Demo
- 1:00 Greek Singing and Dancing
- 1:00 Women's Table Tennis Finals (Russell House Gameroom)
- 2:30 Men's Table Tennis Finals-Advanced (Russell House Gameroom)
- 4:00 Men's Table Tennis Finals-Inter. (Russell House Gameroom)

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Walt Disney World Co. representatives will present an information session on the Walt Disney World College Program on Wednesday, November 13, 7:00 pm at Room #153 — Gambrell Hall. Attendance at this presentation is required to interview for the SPRING '92 COLLEGE PROGRAM. Interview times and locations will be announced. The following majors are encouraged to attend: Business, Communications, Recreation, Hotel/Restaurant and Theater/Drama.

Contact: Cooperative Education
Phone: 777-2124

Walt Disney World Co.

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