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### Make 2008 smoke-free

**Kicking the habit will improve your health and your social life.**

*By Dr. Tedd Mitchell*

**January gets** its name from the Roman god Janus, a fellow who had two faces -- one looking backward and the other looking forward. Such a name makes sense; we reflect on the past year while looking to the future during this month. And that makes January the perfect time for making resolutions. For the approximately one in five adults who smoke, vowing to kick the habit should be at the top of the list.

For a while, it looked like we had smoking on the run. According to the Centers for Disease Control, the percentage of adult smokers fell each year from 1997 to 2004, but then it leveled off. The most recent CDC figures (from 2006) suggest that we still have about the same percentage of adult cigarette smokers (20.8%) as in 2004. This recent stall is a concern. Smoking continues to be the most significant modifiable cause of illness and death among us, so reversing this trend once again is critical to our nation's health.

Here's where the New Year's resolution comes in. Those of you who smoke should take this opportunity to reflect on reasons to kick the habit. We've all heard about the problems smoking causes for the heart and lungs, but consider what it does to other areas of your life, as well. And think about the upside of a smoke-free life. Check out what the data show (see box).



These research observations are not meant to belittle, but rather to inspire. A smoke-free life brings with it much more than just better health; it also brings a better social life.

We live at a time when cigarettes' detrimental effects have been well documented and highly disseminated. I would venture to say that nobody living in the United States would argue that cigarettes are good for you. That's how far we've come over the past half-century. But we appear to have hit a snag. Let's use January 2008 to turn things around. I hope that when we look back in January 2009, we'll see smoking rates on the decline once more.

### **A non-smoking win list:**

1. Your appeal to the opposite sex could triple.
2. You could improve your sexual function.
3. Your wrinkles may appear smoother, and your face may age better than a smoker's.
4. Others are more likely to perceive you as more sophisticated than smokers.
5. Others will tend to view you as more self-disciplined than smokers.
6. Others are more likely to consider you wiser than smokers.
7. Others will tend to think you are more desirable to date than smokers.
8. Even smokers tend to view non-smokers more positively than they view themselves.

*Tedd Mitchell, M.D., president of Dallas' Cooper Clinic, writes HealthSmart every week.*

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## **Health Brief**

### **Dads help ADHD kids**

**A sports program keeps fathers involved -- and learning to give positive feedback.**

*By Peggy J. Noonan*

Traditional treatment programs teach parents how to cope with their kids' attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder -- but, unfortunately, dads tend to drop out or not show up at all.

Adding sports to the mix gets fathers involved and helps children and dads cope better, a study at the State University of New York at Buffalo found.

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**ADHD keys for parents**  
Reward kids for being good.  
Establish clear rules and consequences.  
Be consistent.

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In an eight-week program, ADHD kids ages 6 to 12 play soccer and learn the game's rules and techniques as well as good sportsmanship.

At the same time, dads attend classes in which they learn effective coping strategies for ADHD challenges. One important lesson: how to minimize negative criticisms, "pay attention to their child's good behavior and praise them when they do things the right way," says Gregory A. Fabiano, Ph.D., who developed the program known as COACHES (Coaching Our Acting-Out Children: Heightening Essential Skills) with funding from the National Institute of Mental Health.

After each lesson, dads and kids get together to play a real soccer game.

It's "set up to be just like a real little league," Fabiano says. "The dads' job is to coach the kids" using techniques that they have learned in class. For example, at least five times per quarter, dads are to "catch their kids being good and notice their appropriate behavior. ... And, of course, the goal is that they do those same things with the child at home during the week."

While kids are having fun playing, their negative ADHD behaviors are reduced, so it's easier for dads to see positive results right away.

Fathers play key roles in children's development, especially, Fabiano says, when it comes to helping children figure out the best ways to interact socially with other kids their age.

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