



What Keeps Me Smoke-Free

The most important thing that helps is probably reminding myself the reason why I quit smoking. I also try not to spend a lot of time with smokers, especially in places where smoking is allowed. When my cravings get strong, I step away from smokers. Finally, I carry nicotine gum with me when I know others will be smoking around me.

Although I have not smoked in two years, I consider myself to be in the early stage of living smoke-free. It is getting easier, but I need to keep working on it. I still need to remind myself about what smoking did to my mother, mainly when I am around people who smoke. Every day that I do not smoke, I increase my chances of being smoke-free for the rest of my life. I also remind myself of other benefits to quitting. Like the extra money I am saving and the fact that I don't smell like an ash tray any more! Also, I tell myself that I quit because of my mom. I know she wouldn't want her son to go through the same thing that she did because of smoking. My mom's memory helps me stick to my commitment to be smoke-free.



Produced by

The Tobacco Research and Intervention Program at Moffitt Cancer Center

Funded by

Grants from the National Institutes of Health (R01CA134347; R01DA037961)

1 (877) 954-2548

Projectease@MOFFITT.org

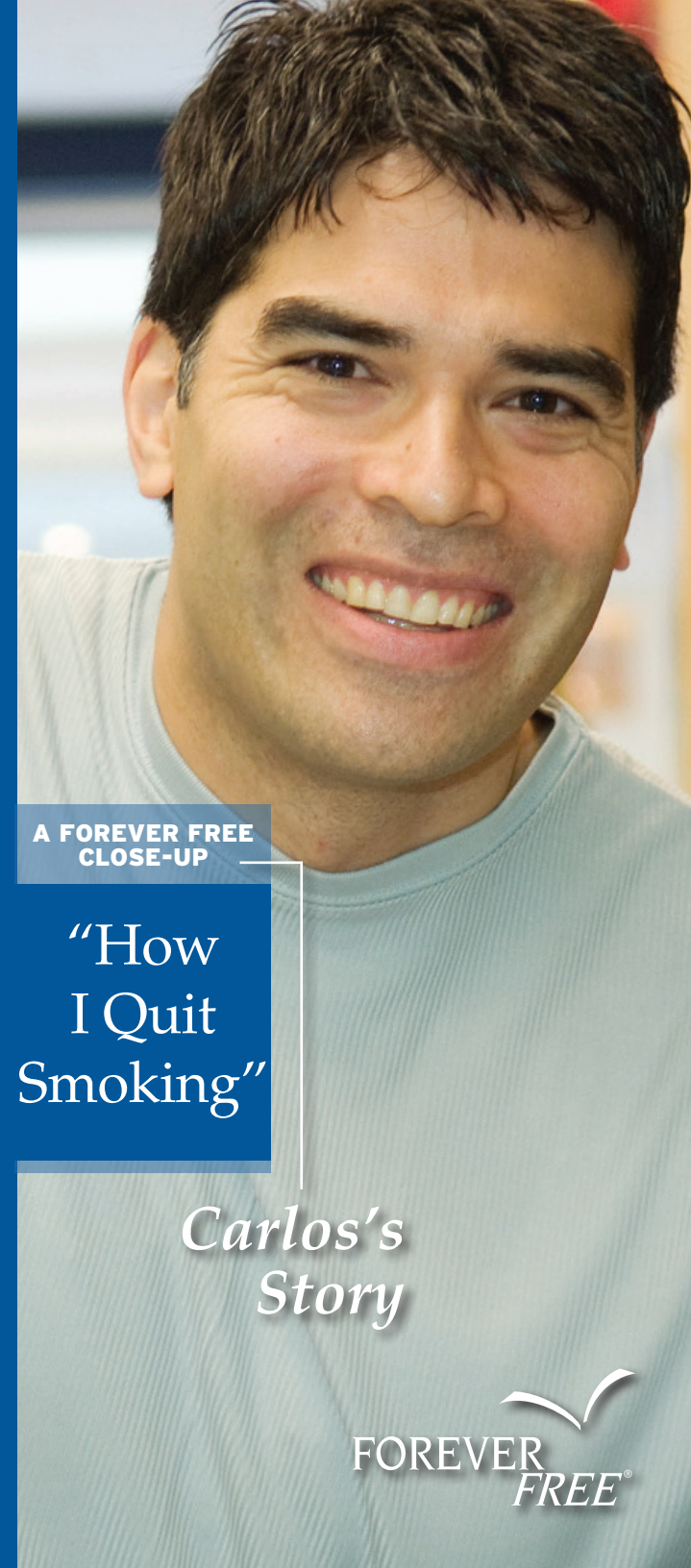
The content is solely the responsibility of the authors and does not necessarily represent the official views of the National Institutes of Health



© 2016 Moffitt Cancer Center. All rights reserved.

JK 9/2016

The people depicted in this series were inspired by real individuals, but the particulars were changed to protect their privacy.



A FOREVER FREE CLOSE-UP

“How I Quit Smoking”

Carlos's Story



My Commitment to Remain Smoke-Free

My name is Carlos and I am 43 years-old. I had my last cigarette two years ago. These past two years were not easy. There were many ups and downs. But one thing stayed the same: my commitment to be smoke-free.

I was raised by my mother, and she was always very important to me. She was a smoker for as long as I can remember. I didn't think anything of her habit when I was younger because she was always healthy. But I can't blame my mom for my smoking. My friends probably had a lot more to do with it.

It didn't happen over night. At first, my friends and I would get cigarettes from other people. Eventually, we started bringing our own cigarettes out with us. Before I knew it, my friends and I were smoking each time we were together. We smoked when we were out at bars, while fishing, and just about anytime we got together. Most of the people we saw socially also smoked.



What Happened to Make Me Want to Quit

I will never forget the day I found out how harmful smoking can be. On this day my mother was told that she had lung cancer. For two months I watched her fight for her life. Still, I kept smoking to help me deal with my pain. By this time, I was up to a pack a day for 20 years and was addicted. I could hardly handle the thought that my mother was dying, let alone the pressure of trying to quit smoking.

The day she died was the day I smoked my last cigarette. I felt I owed it to her to learn from her life. I didn't want to deal with her death by doing the same thing that killed her.

Being Around Smokers

Quitting was hard for many reasons. But the hardest for me was seeing other people smoking around me. At first, it made me angry every time a friend or co-worker would light one up near me. Being a truck driver, most of my breaks at rest stops are spent talking to other truckers who smoke one cigarette after another. When my friends smoked around me I was annoyed. How could they keep smoking, knowing that cigarettes killed my mother and that I was trying to quit?

Finally, I realized I couldn't be mad at my friends. I also couldn't expect everyone to stop smoking around me. I had a choice. It was up to me. I could learn to deal with my cravings, leave when others smoked near me, or stop being friends with people who smoke. Because my friends were very important to me, I didn't want to lose them.

