

Tobacco Free Company a Big Hit

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RESEARCH TRIANGLE PARK, N.C. -- Smoke breaks are now prohibited at one pharmaceutical research company at Research Triangle Park. Since going totally tobacco-free last month, Quintiles says its new policy has actually helped scores of employees put cigarettes out for good. Quintiles is trying to keep its employees happy and healthy. Their RTP campus has a state of the art gym and now the whole campus is tobacco-free. "It makes them healthier, more productive, and it saves the company on healthcare costs, which is a huge issue these days," said Dr. Oren Cohen, Quintiles' chief medical officer "so all around we feel it's a big win-win."

Quintiles initially told its employees the campus was going tobacco-free last September -- months before the policy was put in place. "When I first heard it I thought well how is the employer invading my privacy?" said employee Wayne Riley. Dr. Cohen says other employees were irritated at first too. "That small number is really tiny compared to the very large number of positive comments we've received," Cohen said. Riley was a smoker for 45 years but decided to quit after learning Quintiles was offering its employees counseling and free drugs to help them quit smoking. Now Riley says he's reaping the benefits of being tobacco-free. "My breathing's a lot better. My walking stamina's a lot better. I don't get out of breath as quickly as I did before," Riley said.

While there's no specific enforcement policy in place, if you're caught lighting up enough times, well that could lead to disciplinary action. So far Quintiles says it hasn't had any problems. Dr. Cohen says in addition to Quintiles the SAS Institute and GlaxoSmithKline's campuses are also completely tobacco-free.