

Tobacco product use threatens military readiness

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To our servicemembers:

The surgeons general of the Air Force, Army, Navy, and United States are united in our concerns about high levels of tobacco product use among uniformed servicemembers. Tobacco product use is a threat to the health and fitness of our forces and compromises readiness, the foundation of a strong national defense.

Use of tobacco products among servicemembers is pervasive, harmful, and an urgent public health problem. More than one-third of servicemembers who use tobacco products started after joining the military. A well-known cause of cancers, heart and lung disease, and stroke, tobacco product use jeopardizes fitness and sleep quality and increases stress. In addition, tobacco product users are more likely to be injured and their injuries are slower to heal.

As the surgeons general, responsible for the health and readiness of more than one million lives, we are speaking with one voice to urge the types of actions that can help servicemembers quit all forms of tobacco product use, irrespective of whether it is smoked, smokeless or electronic. Join us now to build a stronger, healthier and more resilient force.

We recommend that leadership:

- Lead by example. Be tobacco-free.
- Stress the negative impact of tobacco product use on health and performance at all levels of command.

Enforce tobacco-free policies to protect against exposure to secondhand smoke and e-cigarette aerosol.

ARTICLE CONTINUES BELOW

Make tobacco product use less convenient and ensure that it is not rewarded.

Coordinate with local, state and national efforts to reduce tobacco product use.

We encourage servicemembers to:

Be tobacco-free.

Reach out to others to help you quit; your team, including medical staff, can assist you.

Ask your health care professional about FDA-approved medications and counseling that can help you quit. Note, e-cigarettes are not approved as cessation aids by the FDA.

Know your Tricare benefits plan — you have complete coverage to help you stop using tobacco products. Visit <https://tricare.mil/tobaccocessation> for more information.

Access these resources:

YouCanQuit2 at <https://www.ycq2.org/>

SmokefreeVET at <https://veterans.smokefree.gov/>

1-800-QUIT-NOW or 1-855-QUIT-VET

SmokefreeTXT at <https://smokefree.gov/smokefreetxt>

Mobile apps: QuitGuide and quitSTART at <https://smokefree.gov/tools-tips/apps>

Visit <https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/campaign/tips/groups/military.html> for more information.

It's never a good time to start using tobacco products and never too late to quit — your health, your performance, and your country depend on it. Sustain the force. Be fit, Be healthy, Be ready!

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