



## Living with HIV/AIDS Celebrating Health and Wellness

*Quitting Smoking is the single MOST important thing you can do to improve your health and quality of life, and extend longevity, besides taking your HIV medications as directed.*

**30 Years** after the deadly AIDS virus was first discovered, medical research and anti-viral medications have greatly prolonged the life expectancy of people diagnosed with HIV/AIDS. But if you smoke this longevity and quality of life can be significantly reduced. Tobacco-related diseases are common causes of illness and death for people living with HIV/AIDS - there is increased risk of developing various cancers, as well as heart and lung diseases.

### **Some of the Facts:**

- Smoking causes a reduction in immune function
- Smoking can interfere with the metabolism of HIV medications making them less effective
- People who are HIV+ and smoke may have a faster progression into AIDS, and develop more life-threatening and opportunistic diseases such as: bacterial and pneumocystis pneumonia, Human Papilloma Virus, Thrush, Oral Hairy leukoplakia (whitish mouth sores), and mycobacterium avium complex (a bacteria found in cigarette filters and papers after they are burned)
- HIV+ smokers are more likely to experience AIDS-related dementia
- HIV+ smokers develop emphysema 4 X faster than HIV negative smokers

### **Benefits of Quitting Smoking**

- More money for things you want to do or purchase
- Reduction of other medications
- Less stress and more self confidence
- Food tastes better
- Better overall health and improved immunity

### **If You Want to Quit:**

- Ask your doctor or case manager for help getting tobacco treatment medications such as nicotine patches and gum
- Join a quit smoking class or seek counseling support
- Call the CA Smokers' Helpline at 1-800 NO-BUTTS
- Ask non-smoking friends to help and support you
- Hang out in more non-smoking environments
- **Keep Trying Till You Quit - You Are Worth It. !**