

# the health advisor

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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## MISSION

To promote, protect, and improve the health of all people in Florida.

**Health care providers**, the goal of the *Health Advisor* is to present health information to your patients, clients, and community partners in a reader-friendly format. Article pages are designed for posting or handouts. If there is a topic that you would like the *Health Advisor* to cover, contact us.

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For the 2010 National Health Observances calendar visit:  
[www.healthfinder.gov/nho/nho.asp](http://www.healthfinder.gov/nho/nho.asp)

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## text4baby



### Free Mobile Health Service Provides Health Tips to Pregnant Women & New Moms

by Carol Scoggins, Bureau of Family and Community Health

**T**he Florida Department of Health's Infant, Maternal, and Reproductive Health Unit has signed a Memorandum of Agreement with the National Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition to promote text4baby. A free mobile information service, text4baby provides pregnant women and new moms with information to help them care for their health and give their babies the best possible start in life.

Women who sign up for the service by texting BABY to 511411 (or BEBE for Spanish) will receive free text messages each week, timed to their baby's due date or date of birth. The messages focus on a variety of topics critical to maternal and child health including: birth defects prevention, immunization, nutrition, seasonal flu, mental health, oral health, and safe sleeping. Text4baby messages also connect women to prenatal and infant care services and other resources.

Research shows that while 90 percent of Americans have a mobile phone, fewer have access to the Internet. Text messaging represents an enormous yet untapped channel for delivering vital health information, and text messaging can be particularly helpful in reaching underserved populations. Over 1.5 trillion text messages were sent in the U.S. in 2008—texting among women of childbearing age is even higher.

Text4baby is made possible through an unprecedented public-private partnership which includes the White House Office on Science and Technology Policy, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Voxiva, CTIA—The Wireless Foundation, Grey Healthcare Group (a WPP company), and founding corporate sponsor Johnson & Johnson. Premier sponsors include WellPoint, Pfizer, and CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield.

Wireless carriers are distributing text messages at no charge to recipients. Implementation partners include BabyCenter, Danya International, Syniverse Technologies, Keynote Systems, and The George Washington University.

#### What can your organization do to promote text4baby?

- Encourage the women you reach to sign up for the service.
- Add text4baby information to your Web site.
- Include text4baby information in your mailings, listserv, or newsletter.
- Display text4baby posters in your facilities.
- Promote text4baby through public health or wellness campaigns.
- Spread the word: be creative and innovative!

Text4baby promotional materials are available at [www.doh.state.fl.us/family/mch/text4baby/text4baby.html](http://www.doh.state.fl.us/family/mch/text4baby/text4baby.html). More information is available at [www.text4baby.org](http://www.text4baby.org).

# Does your Child Play Sports?

## Protect that Smile. Buy a Properly Fitted Mouthguard.

by Rory Reese, Public Health Dental Program



### MOUTHGUARDS

The American Dental Association (ADA) estimates that mouthguards prevent approximately 200,000 orofacial injuries each year in high school and collegiate football alone. For more information, visit the ADA Web site at [www.ada.org](http://www.ada.org).

The ADA recommends mouthguards for the following sports:

acrobatics	water polo	shot putting
football	boxing	squash
martial arts	handball	wrestling
skiing	rugby	field hockey
volleyball	soccer	lacrosse
basketball	weight lifting	skate boarding
gymnastics	discus	surfing
racquetball	throwing	
skydiving	ice hockey	

Several studies suggest that mouthguards reduce the number of concussions by decreasing the force of injuries.

The next time you purchase sports equipment for your child—a uniform and protective gear like a helmet and padding—don't forget a mouthguard. According to the National Youth Sports Safety Foundation for the Prevention of Athletic Injuries, Inc. (NYSSF), dental injuries are the most common type of orofacial (mouth and face) injuries sustained when children and teens play sports. These injuries are not only painful, they can be expensive: the NYSSF reminds parents that if your child's injured teeth are not properly preserved or replanted, your child may face a lifetime of dental cost ranging from \$10,000 to \$15,000 per tooth.

A mouthguard is a horseshoe-shaped soft plastic device that protects the teeth, lips, gums, and cheeks from injuries that can occur when children and teens play sports. In contact sports like football, boxing, martial arts, and hockey, fitted mouthguards are considered essential to prevent injuries. Other sports that are traditionally considered non-contact sports—basketball, baseball, bicycle riding, roller blading, soccer, wrestling, racquetball, surfing, and skateboarding—also require properly fitted mouthguards because of the risk for dental injuries. Several studies suggest that mouthguards reduce the number of concussions by decreasing the force of injuries.

Mouthguard design and construction is important. There are four types of mouthguards. Ready-made, or stock mouthguards, can be purchased in stores; these off-the-

shelf mouthguards are inexpensive and are considered to be the least comfortable.

“Boil and bite” mouthguards, the most common type, can be purchased at sporting goods stores. Inexpensive and sometimes uncomfortable, boil and bite mouthguards are made of thermoplastic materials. According to the makers of this mouthguard, you can form it to your mouth by biting into the mouthguard after it's been dipped in boiling water, but the truth is these mouthguards usually do not fit well, and they do a poor job covering most of the back teeth. Because all mouths are different—some children are missing teeth, some have crooked teeth while others may wear braces—boil and bite mouthguards do not provide the best protection.

Two types of custom mouthguards, vacuum custom made and pressure laminated custom made, are designed and supplied by your dentist. These mouthguards are more expensive, but they are more comfortable and add better protection than the store-bought options. Your dentist can help you select the best custom mouthguard for your child.

Mouthguards can cost as much as \$100, but the money saved from avoiding costly mouth injuries is worth the investment. Mouthguards should be rinsed with water after use and stored in a rigid container with holes to allow the mouthguard to dry. If cared for properly, mouthguards can last for more than one sport's season.

by Rory Reese, Public Health Dental Program

**Ben Franklin said “an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.” This statement definitely applies to oral cancer.** Oral cancer, if not discovered in its earliest stages, can require disfiguring surgeries or lead to death. The earlier oral cancer is found and treated the greater the chance of survival. Oral cancer can be very aggressive with survival rates of less than 41 percent, even after treatment. The majority of oral cancers begin in the tongue; however, oral cancer can also affect the lips, cheeks, floor of the mouth, the throat, and the hard or soft palate (the roof of the mouth). Studies show that 75 percent of all head and neck cancers begin in the mouth.

Oral cancer can affect you at any age. Using tobacco in any form—cigarettes, cigars, pipes, snuff, or spit tobacco—can put you at a higher risk. Certain types of Human papillomavirus (also called HPV) may also play a part in oral cancer.

Men face twice the risk of developing oral cancer than women, with men over the age of 50 having the greatest risk; however, the incidence in women is rising. It is estimated that in 2008 there were over 35,000 diagnoses of oral cancer in the U.S. African American males have the highest risk of developing oral cancer compared to any other group in the U.S.

Oral cancer usually begins with a thickening or sore that does not heal. Any sore that does not heal within two weeks should be checked by a medical or dental provider.

Everyone should be screened for oral cancer by a medical or dental health professional at least once a year. This screening takes very little time. The screening includes an examination of both sides of your tongue, underneath your tongue, the inside of your cheeks, the back of your throat, and your palate. Your medical or dental health professional will feel for lumps in your lips, and the floor of your mouth will be felt from the inside as the underside of your chin is pressed.

**What do Sigmund Freud** (father of psychoanalysis), **Babe Ruth** (baseball player), **George Harrison** (lead guitarist of The Beatles), **Humphrey Bogart** (actor), **Sammy Davis, Jr.** (actor & singer), **Bill Tuttle** (baseball player), **Colleen Zenk Pinter\*** (soap opera actress), and **Roger Ebert** (American film critic & screenwriter) **have in common?**

They all had oral cancer.  
(Do you know the warning signs?)

**The warning signs of cancer spell CAUTION, and they may point to cancer of the mouth.** The warning signs highlighted in red are those that may be directly related to oral cancer. (American Cancer Society)

- C**=Change in color or texture of tissues in mouth.
- A**=A sore that doesn't heal.
- U**=Unusual discharge.
- T**=Thickening or lump in the lip, tongue, or elsewhere.
- I**=Indigestion or difficulty swallowing.
- O**=Obvious change in color or size of a wart or mole.
- N**=Nagging cough or hoarseness.

**What you can do to help prevent oral cancer:**

- Limit the amount of alcohol you drink.
- Stay tobacco free.
- Practice safer sex and limit your exposure to human papillomavirus.
- Use lip balm with sunscreen.
- Check your mouth for sores, lumps, or thickening of tissue.

# HIV/AIDS Community Mobilization Meetings Offered

by Ronald Henderson, Bureau of HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis

**I**n keeping with the National Minority Health Month theme “Man Up for your Health! Healthy Men Move our Communities Forward,” the Bureau of HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis will conduct community mobilization meetings in April. During these meetings, frank discussions specific to men’s sexual actions will take place—men will be encouraged to make changes that can improve their health, and the health of their families and communities. Women and adolescents are invited to join these discussions.

The HIV/AIDS epidemic continues to impact individuals in Florida and throughout the United States. Men, women, children, young, old, black, white, Hispanic, rich, poor, gay, lesbian, or straight—no group is exempt from contracting HIV. Of the reported cases in Florida, 1 in 44 black men, 1 in 117 Hispanic men, and 1 in 209 white men are living with HIV/AIDS.

On September 1, 2009, the Bureau of HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis released the report “Man Up: The Crisis of HIV/AIDS Among Florida’s Men.” The report, now posted on [www.floridaaids.org](http://www.floridaaids.org), encourages men to “man up” and take responsibility for the consequences of their sexual actions and other HIV-risk behaviors for the benefit of themselves and their partners. All over the world, men on average have more sex partners than women. HIV is more easily transmitted sexually from men to women than vice versa, causing increased rates of HIV infection among women.

## Knowing your HIV status is essential

Society often requires men to be strong, unemotional, and virile. Men are generally expected to project the image of being assertive, dominant, self-reliant, and taking risks. Social norms, upbringing, peers, and the media tend to socialize men to meet standards of masculinity that set them apart from women. Some of these expectations can translate into attitudes and behaviors that are unhealthy and in some cases lethal—consider the spread of diseases like HIV/AIDS and hepatitis.

“Perhaps the single most important preventive measure is for people to know their own HIV status. If they are uninfected, this knowledge helps them protect themselves. If they are infected, the information helps them to protect their partners and to seek care and treatment for themselves,” says Thomas Liberti, chief of the Bureau of HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis.

After April, the Bureau of HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis will continue hosting community mobilization meetings aimed at educating men on HIV/AIDS and other issues.

**For information about the Man Up Community Mobilization Initiative, contact Ronald Henderson, statewide minority AIDS coordinator, at 850.245.4334, or visit our Web sites: [www.floridaaids.org](http://www.floridaaids.org) and [www.wemakethechange.com](http://www.wemakethechange.com).**

# Colorectal Cancer— Find Out if You Are at Risk

by Felisha Dickey, Bureau of Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion

March 2010 marks the 11th observance of National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month. Colorectal cancer is a serious disease that affects many Floridians; however, it is one of the most preventable cancers. According to Florida's cancer registry, the Florida Cancer Data System, there were 10,001 colorectal cases diagnosed and 3,678 deaths in 2007 (the most current year that data are available).

Colorectal cancer, also called colon or bowel cancer, is the third leading cause of cancer-related death in Florida, after lung and prostate cancers in men and lung and breast cancers in women. Most colorectal cancers are detected by a polyp, a mushroom-like growth in the inner walls of the colon or rectum. Screening tests can help prevent colorectal cancer by finding pre-cancerous polyps so they can be removed before they turn into cancer.

If you are 50 or older, find out if you are at risk for colorectal cancer. Talk to your health care provider about colorectal cancer screening to determine which screening test is right for you. For additional information, contact the Florida Department of Health's Colorectal Cancer Control Program at 850.245.4330.

## How can you prevent colorectal cancer before it begins?

**STEP 1: GET SCREENED.** Screening for colorectal cancer detects polyps early, improves treatment options, and prevents colorectal cancer deaths. National guidelines recommend that screening for colorectal cancer begin at age 50.

Personal or family history are important risk factors which increase a person's chance of developing colorectal cancer, and this information should be shared with your health care provider. If you, your father, mother, sister, or brother has had colorectal cancer or a history of polyps, then you are at an increased risk for colorectal cancer and should consult with your health care provider to see if screening at an earlier age is recommended.

**STEP 2: LIVE HEALTHY.** Research shows that people who eat foods high in fiber and lower in fat can reduce their risk for colorectal cancer. Limit the amount of fried or high-fat foods you eat. Improve your diet by eating more fruits, vegetables, and whole grains, and try eating more foods from plant sources, such as beans and legumes, in place of red meat several times per week. Maintain a healthy weight and exercise most days of the week.

It's good to be tobacco free! When you use tobacco products, you increase your risk of colorectal cancer. Quit tobacco, and avoid being around others who are tobacco users. The Florida Quitline offers free, confidential, and comprehensive telephone counseling to help you quit smoking or chewing tobacco. Call the Florida Quitline at 1-877-U-CAN-NOW (1.877.822.6669).

Screening for colorectal cancer should begin at age 50



# Nutrition from the Ground Up

submitted by the Bureau of Chronic Disease  
Prevention and Health Promotion

Ask the average child, “Where does your food come from?” and you’ll get a variety of answers which might include: the fridge, the kitchen, the store, factories, Mom, or maybe even McDonalds. But ask the children in several communities throughout Florida and the answer is more likely to be, “Our garden.”

Every March, the American Dietetic Association (ADA) conducts a campaign that focuses on the importance of making informed food choices and developing sound eating and physical activity habits. Eating well can help reduce the risk of chronic diseases like cancer, diabetes, obesity, and hypertension. The theme for March 2010 is “Nutrition from the Ground Up.” Thanks to the efforts of state and local partnerships, children and adults are learning where their food comes from by working the soil in community and school gardens.

Starting in March, the Florida Department of Health’s Bureau of Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion will expand on the successful Grow Healthy initiative. The purpose of the Grow Healthy initiative is to work with local communities to increase the number of community and school gardens. Community and school gardens are intended to foster teamwork within the community, increase consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables, increase daily exercise, and reduce family food expenses.



Last year, over 25 communities received a garden kit that included a supply of vegetable seeds and information on how to develop and sustain a garden. Participants included county health departments, university and K-12 schools, faith-based organizations, neighborhood associations, farm workers, long-term hospital patients, at-risk youth, seniors, and minority groups. Produce from the gardens has been donated to local charities and food pantries, sold in school fundraisers, and distributed to communities and family members.

Several of the gardens are intergenerational efforts, combining the skills of youth and seniors. Many of the projects also provide educational sessions on nutrition, science, and sun safety.

Celebrate National Nutrition Month this year by going outside and working in your garden (for physical activity), and eating fresh fruits and vegetables from your healthy, nutritional harvest. Learn more about the upcoming Grow Healthy initiative: e-mail [Cancer\\_HSFCDD@doh.state.fl.us](mailto:Cancer_HSFCDD@doh.state.fl.us), or call 850.245.4330.

Interested in starting a community garden? Visit the American Community Gardening Association Web site: [www.communitygarden.org/learn/starting-a-community-garden.php](http://www.communitygarden.org/learn/starting-a-community-garden.php).

**The American Dietetic Association (ADA) recommends that you:**

#### **START WITH THE BASICS.**

Eating right doesn’t have to be complicated. A healthful eating plan emphasizes fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low-fat or fat-free dairy and includes lean meats, poultry, fish, beans, and nuts. A healthful eating plan is also low in saturated fats, trans fats, cholesterol, salt, and added sugars.

#### **MAKE CALORIES COUNT!**

Think nutrient-rich rather than “good” or “bad” foods. Most food choices should be packed with vitamins, minerals, fiber, and other nutrients—and lower in calories. Be aware of portion sizes. Low-calorie foods can add up when portions are larger than you need.

**FOCUS ON VARIETY.** Eat different foods from all the food groups. Fruits and vegetables can be fresh, canned, or frozen. Look for locally grown produce that’s in season. Vary protein choices with more fish, beans, and peas. Include at least three servings of whole-grain cereals, breads, crackers, rice, or pasta every day.

#### **MAKE THE MOST OF FAMILY**

**MEALTIME.** Eating meals together helps children develop healthy attitudes toward food. It also enables parents to serve as role models, introduce new foods, and establish regular meal schedules.

#### **BALANCE A HEALTHY DIET WITH PHYSICAL ACTIVITY.**

This is your best recipe for managing weight and overall health and fitness. Set a goal to be physically active at least 30 minutes every day.

**For more information on healthful eating and physical activity habits, visit the ADA Web site: [www.eatright.org/Public/](http://www.eatright.org/Public/).**

## National Women and Girls HIV/AIDS Awareness Day— the Celebration in Polk County

submitted by the Office of Women's Health

The Florida Department of Health's (DOH) Office of Women's Health joined the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Office on Women's Health in celebrating National Women and Girls HIV/AIDS Awareness Day (March 10). On Saturday, March 6, the DOH Office of Women's Health, along with the Polk County Health Department (CHD), hosted the second annual Day of Pampering & Health Education for women and young ladies (13 years and older) in Polk County.

Every 35 minutes, a woman tests positive for HIV in the United States. More and more women have become infected with HIV since it was first reported in the early 1980s. Today, about 1 in 4 Americans living with HIV are women. In 2008, Polk County ranked 8th for HIV cases out of 67 counties in Florida. According to the monthly surveillance reports from the DOH Bureau of HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis, there was a 62 percent increase in Polk's reported HIV cases from 2007 to 2008 (from 103 cases to 167 cases).

"It's critical for females to get tested and know their status," says Thometta Cozart Brooks, event coordinator and Office of Women's Health public relations manager.

The event allowed women and girls the opportunity to learn important women's health information, know their HIV status by getting tested, and enjoy pampering services from local salons and spas. The Day of Pampering & Health Education took place at Polk State College in Winter Haven, Fla.

Regional Minority AIDS Coordinator Teresa White of the Alachua CHD was the luncheon speaker, and Bay News 9 News Anchor Erica Riggins was the emcee. Registration for the event was free.

National Women and Girls HIV/AIDS Awareness Day is a nationwide initiative to raise awareness of the increasing impact of HIV/AIDS on women and girls. Families, health organizations, businesses, communities, the government, and individuals can come together to offer support, encourage discussion, and educate women and girls about

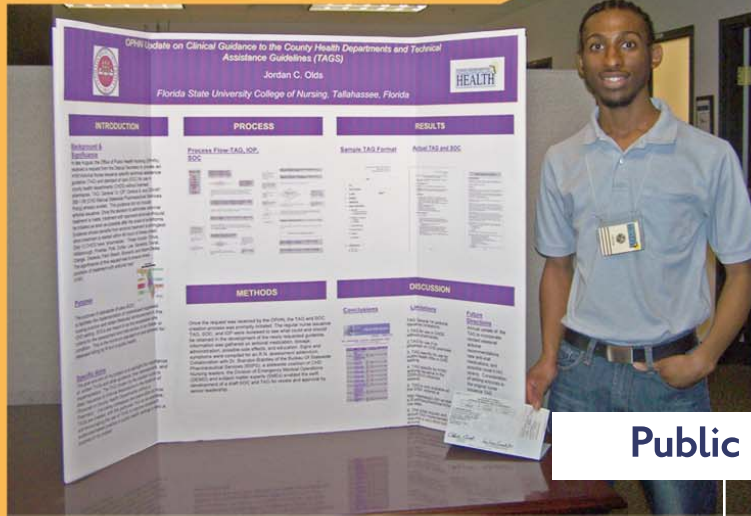


practicing safer sex methods and the importance of getting tested.

Sponsors of the event included the DOH Bureau of HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis, Bartow Front Porch, Bartow Community Redevelopment Agency, Mosaic, and other community organizations.

If your county is interested in hosting next year's Day of Pampering & Health Education, contact Thometta Cozart Brooks at [Thometta\\_Cozart@doh.state.fl.us](mailto:Thometta_Cozart@doh.state.fl.us).

National Women and Girls HIV/AIDS Awareness Day is celebrated every year on March 10. For more information about this national observance, visit [www.womenshealth.gov/nwghaad](http://www.womenshealth.gov/nwghaad). Learn more about the DOH Office of Women's Health at [www.doh.state.fl.us/womenshealth](http://www.doh.state.fl.us/womenshealth).



Jordan Olds standing next to his presentation "OPHN Update on Clinical Guidance to the County Health Departments and Technical Assistance Guidelines."

"Working in the Office of Public Health Nursing was an eye-opening experience. It deepened my appreciation for public health nursing." Jordan Olds, nurse

## Public Health Nursing. . .The Next Generation

by Vivienne Treharne, Office of Public Health Nursing

Jordan Olds represents the next generation of public health nursing. Olds was a fall 2009 Florida State University intern in the Office of Public Health Nursing (OPHN), and recently visited the OPHN to share the news that he received his nursing license. As an intern at OPHN, Olds completed a special project on H1N1 antiviral nurse issuance. His project describes the process for developing guidance to registered nurses (RNs) working in the county health departments (CHDs) in the absence of a physician. This guidance is referred to as "nurse issuance." Olds examined the H1N1 guidance that allows CHD RNs to assess a patient, and issue medications that are pre-packaged and pre-labeled with dosage instructions. The nurse issuance option is important in flu situations since antiviral medication is most effective when treatment is started within 48 hours of illness onset.

According to the *Journal of Nursing Education*, mentoring nursing students is one method of workforce development that recruits new nurses to the field of public health and provides a firm foundation in public health nursing for those who pursue other specialties. Public health educational experiences foster professional socialization. Today in Florida, there are more than 2,800 public health nurses in 67 CHDs, 21 Children's Medical Services (CMS) area offices, and one state hospital. Nurses make up 24 percent of the local CHD workforce according to the 2005 *National Profile of Local Health Departments*.

The OPHN, CHDs, and program offices mentor nursing students from local universities through a planned, supervised internship experience. OPHN hosts one to three baccalaureate students per semester for the final nursing leadership practicum. Additionally, the OPHN is a significant partner with CHDs, CMS area offices, universities, colleges, and hospitals, working to address recruitment and retention of public health nurses.

For more information about student nurse learning opportunities, call the OPHN at 1.850.245.4746.

### Welcome Katie Whitaker

This semester, OPHN is pleased to have Katie Whitaker as our Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) intern. Whitaker's project focuses on updates to the General 3 Nursing Assessment Internal Operating Policy and Technical Assistance Guideline.

"New BSN students are the future of public health nursing," says Carol A. Tanner, nursing services director for the Office of Public Health Nursing. "Partnering with our [Florida] nursing programs allows us to move beyond the 'what' of nursing workforce attrition and focus on the 'how' to grow public health nursing in Florida."

# March 21–28 is Tobacco Free Florida Week 2010

submitted by the Bureau of Tobacco Prevention Program

**Gov. Charlie Crist has proclaimed March 21–28 Tobacco Free Florida Week.** The statewide call to action promotes the Florida Quitline and local cessation services while raising awareness of the impact of secondhand smoke among at-risk populations. Throughout the week, Floridians will be encouraged to recommend friends and loved ones who use tobacco to contact the Florida Quitline for help in overcoming their addiction.

“Be Free for Me” is the theme for the weeklong school- and community-based activities and large-scale sponsorships by Springtime Tallahassee, Sun Sports, and FOX Sports Florida. Key tobacco prevention specialists, schools, and SWAT (Students Working Against Tobacco) youth will all unite to help spread the cessation message on a local level.

During the week, the Tobacco Free Florida Street Team will be in action traveling to various events across the state, including school pep rallies featuring athletes from the Orlando Magic and Miami Heat.

According to the Centers for Disease Control, secondhand smoke is estimated to cause 50,000 deaths per year and contains more than 250 toxic chemicals including 50 that can lead to cancer. There is no safe level of secondhand smoke. Protect yourself and those around you. Refer a friend or family member to the Florida Quitline at 1.877.U.CAN.NOW or to [floridaquitline.com](http://floridaquitline.com).

For more information about Tobacco Free Florida Week or Tobacco Free Florida, visit [tobaccofreeflorida.com](http://tobaccofreeflorida.com).

