

Pharmacists encourage smokers to quit this Ash Wednesday



21 February 2023: Pharmacists are calling on smokers across Ireland to quit smoking this Ash Wednesday, which is also national No Smoking Day.

In Ireland, according to statistics from the HSE, tobacco usage is the leading cause of preventable death with almost 6,000 smokers dying each year from tobacco-related diseases. With the increased prevalence of respiratory illnesses so far this year and the continued presence of COVID-19 in society, it is more important than ever for individuals to quit smoking due to the adverse effect it has on a person's lungs.

The IPU is urging people to decide to make this Ash Wednesday the day they make a positive change in their lives and kick the habit. There is a range of supports and resources available from your local pharmacy, which are proven to help people quit for good with pharmacists uniquely positioned to support people in their journey to stop smoking.

Pharmacist and IPU member Tomás Conefrey said, "We know that quitting smoking is no easy task, which is why we are encouraging people to visit their local pharmacy to find out the resources and supports that are available to them. Quitting smoking is incredibly advantageous for your health and with supports from your local pharmacy team, is entirely achievable.

By quitting smoking an individual reduces their risk of premature death and can add as much as 10 years to their life expectancy. Quitting also reduces the risk for many adverse health effects, including poor reproductive health outcomes, cardiovascular diseases, chronic obstructive

pulmonary disease (COPD), and cancer.”

Mr Conefrey noted, “It is possible to quit smoking and the benefits are remarkable. Every year more and more Irish smokers quit with adult smoking rates halved to levels well below the OECD average by 2019. So even if you think it might be hard, do try – you will be surprised how achievable quitting actually is.”

The IPU is reminding people that quitting smoking is not just advantageous for their health, but also the health of their loved ones. “People living in the same house as a smoker benefit from a reduced risk of smoking-related diseases such as asthma, allergies and cancer when there is less second-hand smoke in the atmosphere,” concluded Mr Conefrey.