

MOTHERS AND BABIES

Pregnant Women Get Help To Quit Smoking

(NAPSA)—A new resource is available to help pregnant women nationwide quit smoking. This “quitline” offers tips and counseling that can make it easier for women to quit smoking despite the stress involved.

Consider the case of Michelle Wilson. She started smoking when she was 13 years old because she wanted to be cool and fit in with her friends who smoked. Wilson never thought about becoming addicted to nicotine or about not being able to quit whenever she wanted.

Nearly seven years later, Wilson found out she was pregnant and tried to quit smoking repeatedly for her and her baby’s health, but couldn’t. In her sixth month, Wilson was smoking between 20 to 30 cigarettes a day, but she still wanted to give them up.

“I didn’t have much willpower to quit because everyone around me smoked,” said Wilson. “Whenever I tried to stop smoking it would only last for a couple of hours.”

Wilson heard about the Great Start program, launched by the American Legacy Foundation®, and decided to pick up the phone and call to get help. Great Start features the first national toll-free telephone quitline offering free counseling in Spanish and English 24 hours a day.

Wilson was paired up with a trained counselor, who sent her a booklet and video to use during her quit attempt. With her counselor’s support, Wilson set a date to quit smoking.

“The tips in the booklet really motivated me and gave me the confidence I needed to quit,” said Wilson. “I had sessions with my Great Start counselor for two months and made some important changes in my life, like hanging out with non-smoking friends and staying busy.”

The first two weeks of Wilson’s quit attempt were difficult



because she experienced strong withdrawal symptoms. However, she made it through with the support of her Great Start counselor, her fiancé and mother. Wilson no longer craves cigarettes and has successfully quit smoking.

“At first I wasn’t interested in counseling because I didn’t believe that talking to someone about smoking would help me quit,” said Wilson. “Now, I don’t know what I would have done without my counselor and the materials. By talking it through with someone and developing a plan to quit, I realized that I could do it.”

Wilson’s story is not unique. She is among 426,000 pregnant women who smoke each year in the United States and need help quitting. Since the launch of Great Start in December 2001, thousands of pregnant smokers have called 1-866-66-START to get help quitting smoking.

“Now that I have quit, I have more time to spend with my baby and have extra money to buy things the baby needs,” said Wilson. “Most important is that I can say that because of all the help I had, quitting wasn’t that hard after all.”

If you are a pregnant smoker who wants to quit, call the Great Start Quitline at 1-866-66-START for help. For more information about the American Legacy Foundation and Great Start, visit www.americanlegacy.org.