



**Let's quit
smoking together.**

**Sign up to make
a quit plan on Nov. 20.**



It's that time of year when thousands take a stand against smoking by participating in the American Cancer Society's **Great American Smokeout** on the third Thursday of November. This annual event serves as a motivating starting point for smokers to put down cigarettes, set aside their vapes, and begin their journey toward healthier living.

With lung cancer remaining the leading cause of cancer-related deaths in the United States, saying no to smoking is more important than ever. Cigarettes contain not only nicotine but also harmful chemicals such as arsenic (found in rat poison), benzene (found in paints and synthetic fibers), and formaldehyde (used in pressed-wood products).

With cigarettes containing such dangerous chemicals, the benefits of quitting become even clearer. Did you know that within the first few minutes of quitting, your heart rate begins to drop? Within just a few days, the levels of carbon monoxide in your blood normalize, and over the years, your risk for serious health concerns—such as stroke, heart attack, heart disease, and cancer—continues to decrease.

While the benefits of quitting are clear, it's important to remember that cigarettes are highly addictive, and quitting doesn't happen overnight. With the right resources and support systems, however, the journey to a healthier life is entirely possible. Join the

Empowerment to Quit movement and access helpful tools at

<https://www.cancer.org/cancer/risk-prevention/tobacco/empowered-to-quit.html>

American Cancer Society. “Health Benefits of Quitting Smoking Over Time.” *American Cancer Society*, last revised May 23 2025. Accessed October 29 2025.

<https://www.cancer.org/cancer/risk-prevention/tobacco/guide-quit-smoking/benefits-of-quit-smoking-over-time.html> [cancer.org](https://www.cancer.org)

American Cancer Society. “Harmful Chemicals in Tobacco Products.” *American Cancer Society*, accessed October 29, 2025, <https://www.cancer.org/cancer/risk-prevention/tobacco/carcinogens-found-in-tobacco-products.html>. [cancer.org](https://www.cancer.org)

The Power of Prevention: Educating Early, Planning Strategically

As we recognize National Impaired Driving Prevention Month this November, we are reminded that prevention begins long before a crisis occurs. The most effective prevention efforts are rooted in Early education, community cooperation, and data-informed planning are the cornerstones of the most successful prevention initiatives.

Substance-Impaired Driving in Northeast Arkansas: A 2025 Snapshot

In 2025, Substance-impaired driving remained a major public safety concern across Northeast Arkansas. According to the Arkansas State Epidemiological Outcomes Workgroup (SEOW), alcohol and drug impairment contributed to a significant share of traffic-related injuries and fatalities in the region. Interesting Insights found:

Alcohol-Impaired Fatalities: Approximately 25–27% of all motor vehicle crash deaths in Arkansas involved alcohol impairment, aligning with national trends.

Young Adult Risk: Individuals aged 21–34 represented the highest proportion of alcohol-impaired driving fatalities, accounting for 27% of such deaths.

Youth Substance Use: In Region 4, which includes counties such as Craighead, Greene, and Mississippi, 33.8% of 12th graders reported having used alcohol at least once, and 22% reported vaping nicotine. Alarming, the average age of first alcohol use was just 10.5 years, highlighting the need for early intervention.

Statewide Prevention Campaigns: Initiatives like “Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over” and “Drive High, Get a DWI” were implemented throughout 2025, particularly during high-risk times such as the holiday season.

These findings emphasize the critical importance of early prevention education and sustained community engagement to reduce impaired driving and save lives.

Research consistently shows that early intervention is one of the most effective strategies to reduce youth substance use. The Strategic Prevention Framework (SPF), developed by SAMHSA, offers a five-step, data-driven model to guide communities in preventing substance misuse. The steps: Assessment, Capacity, Planning, Implementation, and Evaluation, are supported by the principles of cultural competence and sustainability, ensuring that prevention efforts are inclusive, effective, and long-lasting. Let’s continue to educate, empower, and protect our youth. Prevention is Powerful and It Starts with Us

Sources

2024 Arkansas Prevention Needs Assessment (APNA) – Region 4 Report

Arkansas Department of Human Services, Division of Aging, Adults, and Behavioral Health Services & University of Arkansas at Little Rock MidSOUTH Center for Prevention and Training.

[Region 4 Counties: Clay, Craighead, Greene, Lawrence, Mississippi, Poinsett, Randolph]

Data collected Fall 2024.

SAMHSA’s Strategic Prevention Framework (SPF) Guide

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), 2019.

“A Guide to SAMHSA’s Strategic Prevention Framework.”

<https://www.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/20190620-samhsa-strategic-prevention-framework-guide.pdf>

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA)

“Drug-Impaired Driving.”

<https://www.nhtsa.gov/risky-driving/drug-impaired-driving>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

“Impaired Driving: Get the Facts.”

https://www.cdc.gov/transportationsafety/impaired_driving/index.html

Arkansas State Police & SEOW (State Epidemiological Outcomes Workgroup)

2025 preliminary traffic crash data (accessed via public safety reports and regional summaries).