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Kick Butts Day

This Wednesday, March 23, 2011 marks Kick Butts Day (KBD), a nationally recognized day of advocacy that empowers youth to speak up and take action against tobacco use. Tobacco use affects us all, health-wise and environmentally. The latest Surgeon General's Report titled, "How Tobacco Smoke Causes Disease," states even occasional smoking or exposure to secondhand smoke causes immediate damage to your body that can lead to serious illness or death.

Beyond the harm smoking does to the body, tobacco products also endanger the environment. Cigarette butts are the No. 1 source of litter in parks and beaches. It can take one butt up to 15 years to disintegrate and one cigarette contains more than 4,000 chemicals, 200 of which contain cancer-causing chemicals that can leach into the soil and water.

Below are things each of us can do this Kick Butts Day:

- Prevent youth from smoking. Each day, about 3,500 youth under 18 try smoking for the first time and another 1,000 become daily smokers.
- Protect others from secondhand smoke. Exposure to secondhand smoke results in almost 50,000 deaths a year in the United States and causes over 1 million illnesses in children. Even youth who do not smoke are at risk of secondhand smoke-related health problems.
- Encourage smokers to quit or try to quit if you smoke. Quitting at any age is beneficial. Within the first 20 minutes of quitting, the healing process begins. The benefits will continue to improve your health and quality of life for years. To quit, contact the Ohio Tobacco Quit Line at 1-800-QUIT-NOW or Licking Memorial Health Systems Quit for Your Health cessation program at 740-348-7848.
- Set a positive example and do not litter your butts and/or pick up butts as a community service project.

For more information, please contact Mary Richardson at 740-349-6535 or mrichardson@lickingcohealth.org.