

Flowers Hospital Makes a Healthy Change

12/26/2013

(DOTHAN, AL, November 15, 2013) – As a healthcare provider, Flowers Hospital has a responsibility to provide and promote a healthy environment for our patients, visitors and staff. In keeping with our mission to care for you as family, we will become a tobacco-free campus January 1, 2014. Physicians, employees, volunteers and contracted vendors made a commitment to go tobacco-free while at work on June 1, 2013.

“Continued tobacco-use can cause problems for hospitalized patients: smoking impedes wound healing, increases infection rates in surgeries and is the most common cause of poor birth outcomes,” explained Dan Cumbie, Chief Nursing Officer.

Since making their commitment to stop smoking at work, many employees have quit smoking entirely. They all agree that a tobacco-free workplace gave them the incentive to do what they had often thought of doing – quit smoking once and for all. “I tried many times before to quit smoking, but this time was different”, says Tasha Maxwell, Unit Coordinator of the Emergency Department. “I started using an electronic cigarette in May to prepare myself. Now, I am tobacco-free and I breathe better, no longer experiencing shortness of breath.”

The use of any tobacco product will be prohibited inside and outside all Flowers Hospital property and grounds, including parking lots. We realize that hospitalization is a stressful time and it may be difficult for some smokers to refrain from smoking for an extended period of time. Should you ever need to visit our facility, we encourage you to discuss your smoking with your healthcare provider or consider over-the-counter nicotine aids available at most drug stores. As a patient, your nurse can arrange with your physician a variety of alternatives.

“We started our journey to a tobacco-free environment in June with our own employees and volunteers, supported by our medical staff. We believe Flowers Hospital has a responsibility to provide a healthy and safe environment for employees, patients and visitors, and to promote positive healthy behaviors. Therefore, we must “walk the talk” and show our commitment and leadership in tangible ways”, commented Suzanne Woods, Chief Executive Officer.

Thinking about quitting smoking? We can help provide information and links to resources. The health benefits begin within minutes of smoking your last cigarette:

- Within 20 minutes, your heart rate drops.
- 12 hours later, the carbon monoxide level in your blood drops to normal.
- 2 weeks to 3 months after quitting, your heart attack risk begins to drop and your lung function begins to improve.
- One year after you quit, your added risk of coronary heart disease is reduced by half.

- Between 5 and 15 years, your stroke risk is reduced to that of a non-smoker's.
- 10 years after quitting, your risk of death from lung cancer is about half that of a smoker. Your risk for cancers of the mouth, throat, esophagus, bladder, kidney and pancreas also decreases.
- 15 years after quitting, your risk for coronary heart disease is back to that of a non-smoker.

If you or anyone else you know would like support to quit smoking, please call the National Tobacco Quit Line at 1-800-QUIT-NOW or go online to www.quitline.com.

About Flowers Hospital

Flowers Hospital has served the healthcare needs of the Wiregrass for over 60 years. The facility is not only an important resource for the Dothan community, it also serves as a major tertiary referral center for the Tri-State area of south Alabama, southwest Georgia, and northwest Florida. By combining responsible personnel of approximately 1,300 employees, modern technology, effective management, sophisticated support services, up-to-date professional education programs and a staff of over 300 exceptional physicians, Flowers Hospital is able to assure patients of quality healthcare. In August 2013, Flowers Hospital was recognized as the safest hospital in the state of Alabama by Consumer Reports. Flowers Hospital was named as one of the nation's Top Performers on Key Quality Measures® by The Joint Commission, the leading accreditor of U.S. Healthcare Organizations, for attaining and sustaining excellence in the following

measure sets: Heart Attack, Heart Failure, Pneumonia and Surgical Care. This is the second time that Flowers Hospital is being recognized as a Top Performer.

For more information please visit www.flowershospital.com.