



# **Welcome to the Trail of Courage!**

## **Philmont Scout Ranch • Boy Scouts of America**

When you help your crew follow this trail, you all will learn how to make the *Right Decisions, Right Now*. At the end of the trek each member of your crew will have the opportunity to pledge to be tobacco free — and earn a patch along with an understanding of healthy habits to live by.

Use this guide to spark meaningful discussions, one per evening, on the seven points of the Crew Pledge:

Say the Crew Pledge together at the start of the trek:

***"I pledge to become personally fit.***

***I pledge to eat a nutritious diet.***

***I pledge to exercise.***

***I pledge to be tobacco-free and not smoke or use smokeless products.***

***I pledge to live free of drug and alcohol habits.***

***I pledge to learn the seven cancer danger signs.***

***I pledge to live the Scout Oath and Law."***

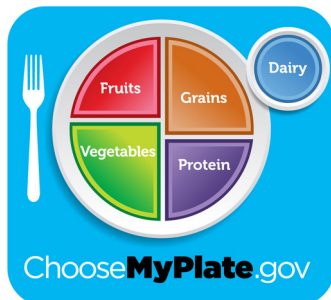
## **1 "I Pledge to Become Personally Fit"**

...by being mentally, physically and socially healthy. Personal fitness is an individual effort and a desire to be the best I can be, resulting in more energy, better stress relief and an improved self image. I will understand and discuss the challenges of peer pressure, bullying and being socially accepted.

## **2 "I Pledge to Eat a Nutritious Diet"**

A healthy diet should provide six basic nutrients and building blocks for good health: protein, fat, carbohydrates, water, vitamins and minerals.

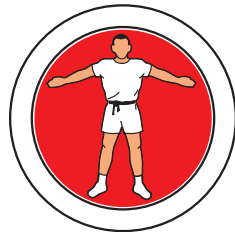
Follow **MyPlate.gov** guidelines to balance calories; avoid oversized portions; eat more vegetables, fruits, whole grains and dairy products; cut back on solid fats, added sugars and salt; and drink water instead of sugary drinks.



### 3 “I Pledge to Exercise”

Create and use a fitness program that matches your lifestyle and the seasons. Vary your exercise routine and include the following:

- **Aerobic exercises:** Benefit the cardiac, circulatory and pulmonary functions and increase endurance.
- **Strength exercises:** Promote muscular strength and endurance.
- **Flexibility exercises:** Increase range of motion of joints. Flexibility also helps reduce the chance of injury.



Refer to the **Personal Fitness Merit Badge pamphlet**, which contains information about how you may engage in a personal exercise program and information about healthy eating and living habits

### 4 “I Pledge to be Tobacco-Free”

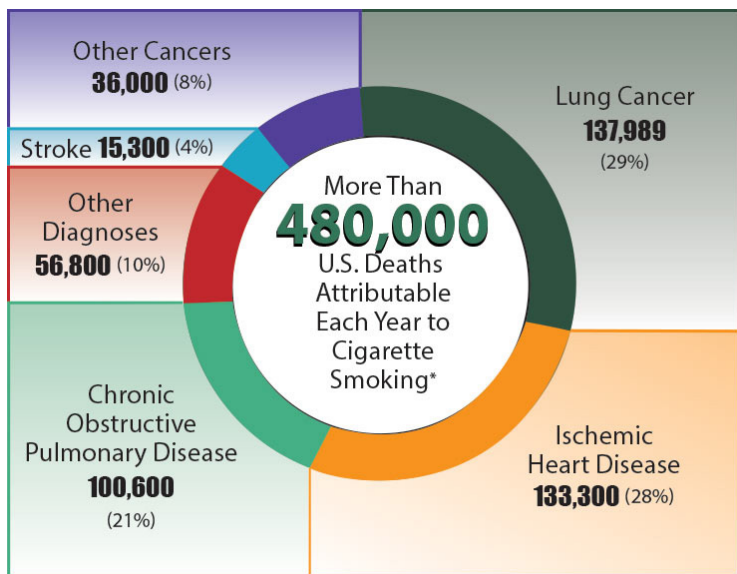
- Smoking triples the risk of developing cardiovascular disease and affects pulmonary (lung) function. Just two weeks after quitting smoking your body begins to heal, and within a few years lung capacity will double.
- Smokeless tobacco increases the chance of gum disease and oral cancer. The nicotine in smokeless tobacco can be as addictive as that in cigarettes and other forms of smoking.
- Tobacco use increases cancer risk and hastens its growth. More than 4,000 chemical compounds have been identified in cigarette smoke including such compounds as arsenic, benzene, formaldehyde and others.
- Tobacco use damages the body's ability to fight infections.
- Tobacco use has been shown to raise the risk of stroke.
- All tobacco products contain Nicotine, an addictive drug that makes it very difficult to quit using them.
- Each year, cigarette smoking causes nearly 500,000 deaths in the U.S. alone, which is more than all the deaths caused by illicit drugs, car crashes, homicides and suicides combined.

### 5 “I Pledge to Live Free of Drug and Alcohol Habits”

[**ha-bit** noun *a settled or regular tendency, especially one that is hard to give up*]

Habits, indeed, are hard to give up. But saying NO up front can stop a habit from ever beginning. Always say no to illicit drug use and, if you're not of legal age, alcohol. (If you are of legal age, say NO to alcohol becoming a habit. Pledge to drink responsibly, to not overindulge, to make safe choices, and to always designate a driver.)

- Take a stand and stick up for yourself.
- Say NO and warn about the consequences.
- Say NO but try to add a little humor to your refusal.
- Steer clear and avoid the pressure.
- Say NO and change the subject or suggest something else.
- Reverse the pressure. Put on a little pressure of your own.
- Say NO and walk away with no explanation.
- Say NO and ask a question.
- Say NO and give a reason for your refusal.
- Use prescription and over-the-counter medications only as prescribed.



\*Average annual number of deaths 2005–2009

## 6 “I Pledge to Learn the Seven Cancer Danger Signs”

- A mouth or skin sore that does not heal could be malignant.
- A lump in the testes could indicate testicular cancer.

Thickening of breast tissue or a lump in the breast is a warning sign of breast cancer.

- Change in bowel or bladder habits could signal colorectal cancer.
- Unusual bleeding or discharge from the rectum or bladder could mean colorectal, prostate or bladder cancer.
- Indigestion or trouble swallowing could be cancer of the mouth, throat, esophagus or stomach.
- Obvious changes to moles or warts could indicate skin cancer.
- Nagging cough or hoarseness that persists for 4–6 weeks could be a sign of lung or throat cancer.

## 7 “I Pledge to Live the Scout Oath and Law.”

I will do my best to educate my friends and family to become personally fit and to understand the dangers of tobacco products, illegal drugs and alcohol.

***On my honor, I will do my best  
To do my duty to God and my country and to obey the Scout Law;  
To help other people at all times;  
To keep myself physically strong, mentally awake  
and morally straight.***

***A Scout is:  
Trustworthy, Loyal, Helpful, Friendly, Courteous, Kind,  
Obedient, Cheerful, Thrifty, Brave, Clean and Reverent***

**If you have already picked up the smoking habit, know this: You can quit. Here is advice from someone who has done it:**

- Millions of people have quit using tobacco. **YOU CAN TOO!**
- Cigarettes, cigars, pipes, snuff and chewing tobacco — they all contain nicotine.
- The use of tobacco products is not “chic” or adult. **IT STINKS!**
- Nicotine is not only **ADDICTIVE**, it will **KILL YOU!**
- Make a mature, adult decision. Take the first step: **QUIT TODAY.**
- Breaking your addiction is not a short-time thing to do.
- The urge to use tobacco can last as long as two years.
- It's not easy, but **YOU CAN** do it, and only **YOU CAN** do it.
- Don't try to taper off your use of tobacco.

**JUST QUIT.**

- Dispose of all tobacco items, including ash trays and lighters.
- Tell family and friends you have quit. They will want to support you.
- Approach each day with, “I won't take my first smoke or chew today!”
- This is probably the most important decision that **YOU** can make.



***QUIT TODAY and STICK WITH IT. IT'S YOUR LIFE.***

## ***It's the last night of the trek...***

The Crew Leader will ask those who are ready to join the Trail of Courage—Right Decisions/Right Now program to pledge to be fit and tobacco-free by repeating the Crew Pledge as a group, then reciting the Personal Pledge individually. Then, in unison, repeat the Scout Oath and the Scout Law.

*Say the Crew Pledge together:*

***“I pledge to become personally fit.***

***I pledge to eat a nutritious diet.***

***I pledge to exercise.***

***I pledge to be tobacco-free and not smoke or use smokeless products.***

***I pledge to live free of drug and alcohol habits.***

***I pledge to learn the seven cancer danger signs.***

***I pledge to live the Scout Oath and Law.”***

*Follow with the Personal Pledge. The Crew Leader should guide each individual as he or she recites the Personal Pledge and signs the pledge insert.*

***“I pledge that I will not use tobacco products and will live free from drug and alcohol habits.***

***I will do my best to educate my friends and my family to the dangers of using these products.***

***I recommit to living every day by the Scout Oath and Scout Law.***

***I will make the right decisions right now and choose to refuse when offered dangerous substances.”***