

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."

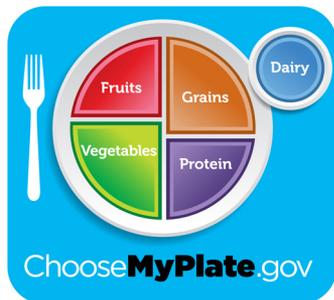
1 "I Pledge to Become Personally Fit"

...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.

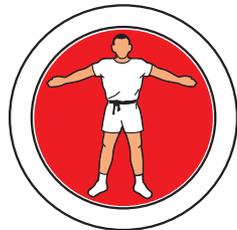
Follow **MyPlate.gov** guidelines to balance calories; avoid oversized portions; eat more vegetables, fruits, whole grains and dairy products; cut back on solid fats, added sugars and salt; and drink water instead of sugary drinks.



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”

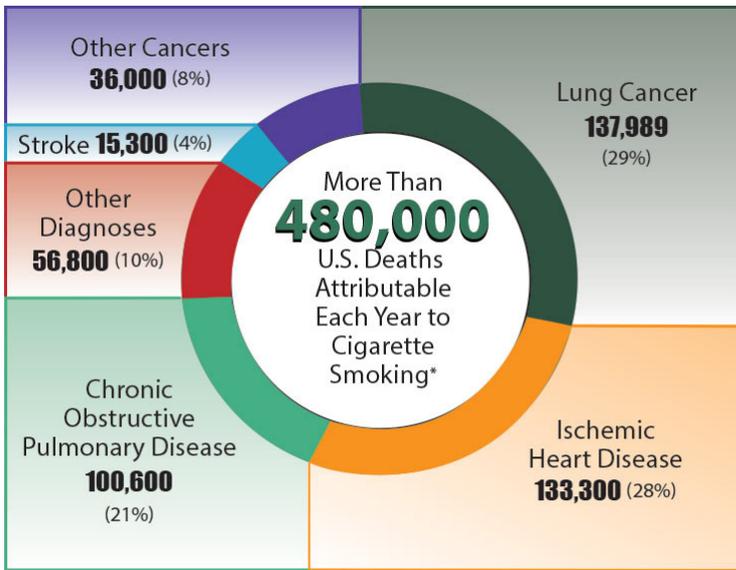
- Smoking triples the risk of developing cardiovascular disease and affects pulmonary (lung) function. Just two weeks after quitting smoking your body begins to heal, and within a few years lung capacity will double.
- Smokeless tobacco increases the chance of gum disease and oral cancer. The nicotine 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.”