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Text messages help smokers quit

The British Heart Foundation is launching a new weapon against smoking - sending supportive texts and e-mails to those trying to quit.

Advice packs giving practical tips on giving up will be sent to millions of smokers and their families in England.



The BHF is re-running adverts showing fatty deposits in arteries

Smokers can also sign up for the free texts and e-mails which will describe how their bodies recover from smoking.

There is also a counselling helpline and "Fatris", a Tetris-style game that can be played on a mobile or the net.

The BHF hopes a multimedia approach will encourage more people to quit.

The charity is also relaunching its award-winning TV adverts featuring cigarettes and arteries dripping with the kind of fatty deposit that clogs up arteries and leads to heart disease.

“ We are waging a war on smoking, not on smokers ”

Peter Hollins, director general of the BHF

The adverts prompted 10,000 calls to its helpline and 62,000 visited its website after only a month.

The BHF said 70% of smokers wanted to quit, and it wanted to help show them how they could achieve their goal.

Director general Peter Hollins said: "We are waging a war on smoking, not on smokers.

"As most smokers want to give up, we need to give them all the ammunition they need to do so."

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The Department of Health has given £5 million towards BHF's campaign, called 'Give Up Before You Clog Up'.

Public Health Minister, Melanie Johnson said: "I'm delighted these advertisements are back to emphasise the fact that smoking is a primary cause of heart disease.

"They give an extremely powerful visual representation of the damage caused by every cigarette."



Fatty deposits can clog arteries

Pauline Beal, Stop Smoking Adviser with North Birmingham Primary Care Trust, said the BHF adverts struck a chord with smokers.

"We always ask our clients what made them make their decision to come to the stop smoking sessions.

"I think the images show so graphically what happens to a smoker's arteries that people relate it to themselves.

"It makes them want to quit."

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