

## Thousands predicted to quit smoking in January 2009

Submitted by: Stop Smoking Shop

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Record numbers of smokers are predicted to quit in January 2009, according to an online store supplying nicotine patches and gum.

Simon Driscoll, General Manager of Stop Smoking Shop, said "We have seen an unprecedented interest in our website in the run up to the New Year. We've seen record numbers of people using our online tools to work out how much time and money they use smoking cigarettes – as well as finding out more about the impact their habit is having on their health.

"It takes just a minute on Stop Smoking Shop to calculate the details of how much your personal smoking habit costs you, how much time it takes up, and the real impact on your health.

"Many smokers are also catching on to the fact that like the banks, the tobacco industry is lining its pockets at their expense – and no-one wants to be taken for a mug."

Mr Driscoll thinks the current interest in stop smoking products is due to two things – the traditional New Year's resolutions and the current economic situation.

He said: "As usual we are seeing a seasonal uplift in people wanting to quit in early January when they are looking for a fresh start. But we also believe interest in quitting has been boosted by the UK recession, which has meant people are watching every penny they spend.

"One of our key messages to smokers thinking about stopping is that they will save an awful lot of money. Smoking is simply money going up in smoke – a 20-a-day habit is equivalent to buying a decent MP3 player each month and setting fire to it.

"Once people get a handle on the cost of their smoking, they start to see spending a few pounds on quitting as an investment."

While there is contradictory evidence as to whether 2007's smoking ban is making people quit, any smoker will tell you that it has certainly made life more difficult for smokers. The Health Survey for England found that 24% of men and 21% of women in England are current smokers - a similar number as to before the smoking ban. However, a survey by Spare Room, a flat share website, says only 1 in 10 respondents were happy for guests to light up in their house, also hinting that tolerance of smokers may be reaching a tipping point.

The government has also been seen to step up its campaign against smoking, a habit which costs the NHS about £1.4bn each year in treated related illnesses, with a ban on displaying cigarettes above the counter due to become law in early 2009. In Scotland cigarette vending machines could also be outlawed to prevent the uptake of smoking by teenagers.

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