



Department of Health  
Agency of Human Services



## Vermont Quit Network Launches Online Game to Help Smokers Through Cigarette Cravings

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BURLINGTON – More than 83,000 Vermont adults smoke, but in any given year more than half of them make at least one serious quit attempt. The Vermont Quit Network – a service of the Vermont Department of Health – has developed an innovative online game to help the thousands of Vermonters who are trying to quit smoking for good.

The online game, called “Khemia,” provides both a distraction from cigarette cravings and personalized support for quitting. Designed to be played in five to 10 minutes – the average craving lasts about five minutes – Khemia has two game styles and five different levels of play.

Khemia is just one of the tools available in the new online “My Quit Kit,” which is accessible at [VTQuitNetwork.org](http://VTQuitNetwork.org). Each time a user logs on to the free application, My Quit Kit displays one of the reasons why the user wants to quit smoking. These reasons are selected and personalized by the user when setting up the game. My Quit Kit also tracks the number of cigarettes the user has not smoked, and the amount of money saved by not smoking.

Players record their level of cigarette craving when they log in, and these cravings are added to a chart that can help the user see trends – like the time of day when cravings are most likely to hit – that can lead to positive behavior changes.

“We’re constantly seeking new ways to provide effective tools that support Vermonters who are trying to quit smoking, especially those trying to quit on their own,” said Health Commissioner Wendy Davis, MD. “Research tells us that the majority of the population is online, and most game users today are adults – that’s why we are trying this newest tool to help adult smokers quit.”

Using online games to support attempts to quit smoking is a growing trend because the online tools are a readily available and cost-effective evidence-based distraction. The Princeton Foundation, the Maine Medical Center and the University of Washington School of Medicine are all using various games to enhance health. Columbia University Teacher’s College, working with the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation’s Health Games Research program, is developing a smart phone game application specifically for smokers.

The Vermont Quit Network developed Khemia in coordination with Hoozinga Game Media, a local interactive media company focused on the creation of serious games. President Amanda Crispel and the Hoozinga leadership team are also faculty members from, or graduates of, Champlain College’s Game Design program.

“Hoozinga believes in the power of play to influence and to be a catalyst for action and positive change,” said Crispel. “We hope that our work with the Vermont Department of Health will help smokers have fun playing a serious game that can strengthen their ability to quit.”

While the majority of smokers will ultimately quit without quit counseling, statistics from the Vermont Department of Health show that those who use cessation services are up to five times more likely to be successful when they try to quit smoking than those who do not use cessation services. My Quit Kit and the host of other Quit Your Way tools were developed to support those smokers who intend to quit without traditional counseling.

In addition to the new game, the Vermont Quit Network also provides extensive online, phone and in-person coaching and support options as well as practical tools to help Vermonters stop smoking. Free nicotine-replacement gum, patches or lozenges are delivered directly to smokers’ homes (while supplies last). Visit [VTQuitNetwork.org](http://VTQuitNetwork.org) to find out more.

For more information on the Vermont Tobacco Control Program visit <http://healthvermont.gov>.

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