

HEALTH

Graphic Anti-Tobacco Campaign Debuts

New effort tries to shock smokers into quitting

(AP) — In a graphic new ad campaign announced Thursday, the government is trying to shock smokers into quitting with the sometimes-gruesome stories of people damaged by tobacco products.

The new effort confronts a hard truth: Despite increased tobacco taxes and bans in many public places, the adult smoking rate hasn't really budged since 2003.

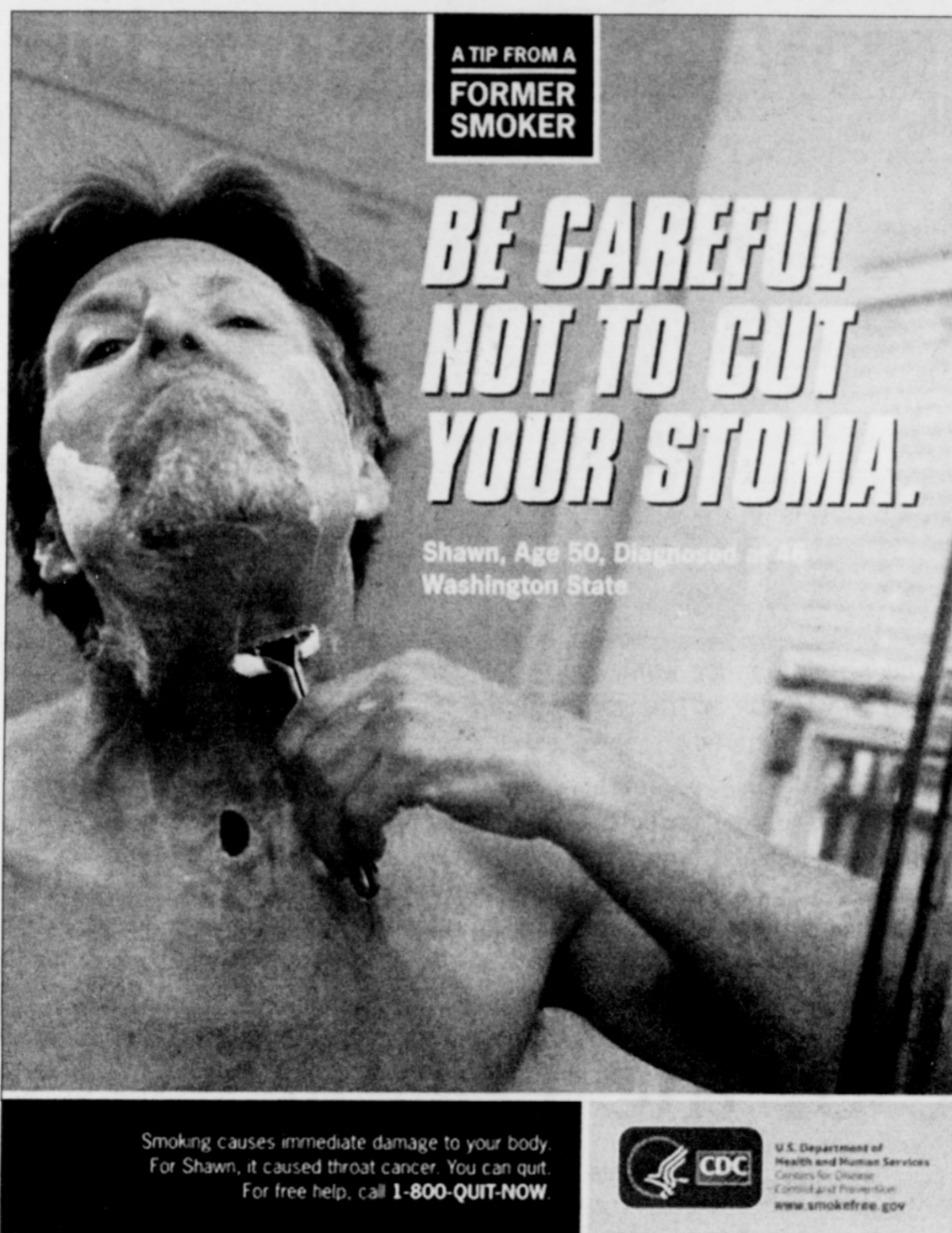
"When we look back on just a few decades to the days of smoking on airplanes and elevators, it can be easy to focus on how far we've come," said Secretary of Health and Human Resources Kathleen Sebelius, at a news conference.

But smoking continues to take a devastating toll on the American public, and the new ads are meant to be "a wake-up call" to smokers who may not truly grasp the dangers that still exist, she added.

The billboards and print, radio and TV ads show people whose smoking resulted in heart surgery, a tracheotomy, lost limbs or paralysis. The \$54 million campaign is the largest and starkest anti-smoking push by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and its first national advertising effort.

The agency is hoping the spots, which begin Monday and will air for at least 12 weeks, will persuade as many as 50,000 Americans to stop smoking.

"This is incredibly important. It's not every



A public service advertisement by the Centers for Disease Control shows Shawn Wright who had a tracheotomy after being diagnosed with head and neck cancer. The government is trying to shock smokers into quitting with a graphic nationwide advertising campaign.

day we release something that will save thousands of lives," CDC Director Dr. Thomas Frieden said in a telephone interview.

That bold prediction is based on earlier research that found aggressive anti-smoking campaigns using hard-hitting images sometimes led to decreases in smoking. After decades of decline, the adult smoking rate has stalled at about 20 percent in recent years.

Advocates say it's important to jolt a weary public that has been listening to government warnings about the dangers of smoking for nearly 50 years.

"There is an urgent need for this media campaign," Matthew Myers, president of the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, said in a statement.

One of the print ads features Shawn Wright from Washington state who had a tracheotomy after being diagnosed with head and neck cancer four years ago. The ad shows the 50-year-old shaving, his razor moving down toward a red gaping hole at the base of his neck that he uses to speak and breathe.

An advertising firm, Arnold Worldwide, found Wright and about a dozen others who developed cancer or other health problems after smoking for the ads.

Federal health agencies have gradually embraced graphic anti-smoking imagery. Last year, the Food and Drug Administration approved nine images to be displayed on cigarette packages. Among them were a man exhaling cigarette smoke through a tracheotomy hole in his throat, and a diseased mouth with what appear to be cancerous lesions.

Last month, a federal judge blocked the requirement that tobacco companies put the images on their packages, saying it was unconstitutional.

Red Meat Health Risks Found

Eating a portion of processed red meat daily can boost a person's risk of dying young by up to 20 percent, according to a new long-running study.

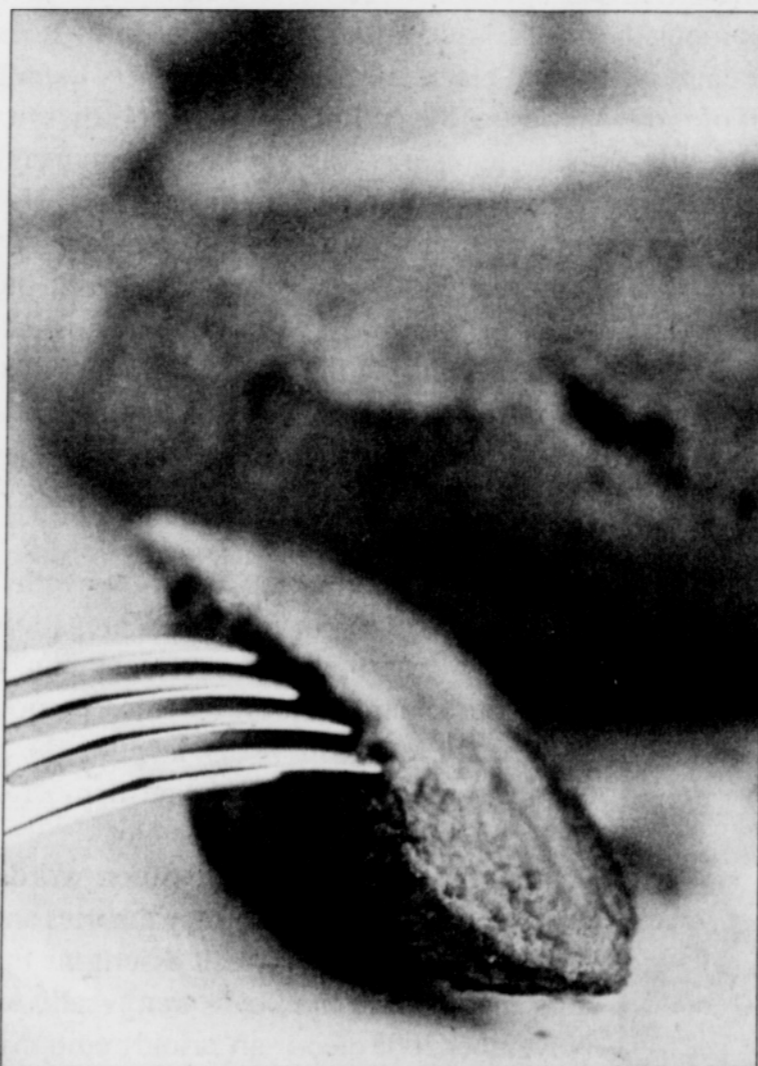
While the research by Harvard University experts offers more evidence that eating red meat increases the risk of heart disease and cancer, it also counsels that substituting fish and poultry may lower early death risk.

Researchers gleaned their data from a study of 37,698 men who were followed for 22 years and 83,644 women who were tracked for 28 years.

Those who ate a card-deck-sized serving of unprocessed red meat each day on average saw a 13 percent higher risk of dying than those who did not eat red meat as frequently.

And if the red meat was processed, like in a hot dog or two slices of bacon, that risk jumped to 20 percent.

However, substituting nuts for red meat lowered total mortality risk by 19 percent, while poultry or whole grains lowered the risk 14 percent and fish did so by seven percent.



A study finds that eating red meat daily boosts risk of dying young.

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