

Katherine Saucedo: How Quitxt Helped Me Kick My Smoking Habit

Smoking cigarettes is the top cause of preventable death in the United States.

The good news is that help is out there—just ask Katherine Saucedo.

Saucedo, a San Antonio resident, got help quitting smoking from the no-cost *Quitxt* bilingual text-message service from UT Health San Antonio.

[Quitxt](#), created by Dr. Amelie G. Ramirez and Dr. Patricia Chalela at UT Health San Antonio with the support of the Cancer Prevention and Research Institute of Texas, sends text messages to help South Texas adults quit smoking. Messages help with motivation to quit, setting a quit date, handling stress, using nicotine replacement (if needed), and more.

Saucedo has been smoke-free for the past three months using *Quitxt*.

“Huge improvements, just better lung capacity. I don't feel short of breath just walking up a flight of stairs. I don't have that awful, ugly cough anymore,” Saucedo said.

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Saucedo's Smoking Habit Formed at a Young Age

In her early 20s, Saucedo began smoking cigarettes from time to time.

But she didn't consider it a habit. She usually smoked only in social settings.

“It was never a really strong addiction for me. I found that I could pick them up and put them down,” Saucedo said.

However, her addiction to smoking skyrocketed once she discovered e-cigarettes.

“What really got me was vaping, and that took me by surprise, I think sometime around [the COVID-19 pandemic], I picked up my first nicotine vape, and it was like an instantaneous addiction for me,” Saucedo said.

Saucedo didn't feel pressure to quit because everyone around her also smoked.

“I had friends and family members who smoked cigarettes and then once vaping hit the scene, nearly everyone in my family vaped,” Saucedo said.

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Saucedo's First Step toward Quitting Smoking

Saucedo noticed that smoking and vaping were taking a toll on her health.

“My health in general was just a huge concern for me. I noticed that my lungs were not as healthy. I was coughing a lot. I was really short of breath in times where I really knew that I shouldn't have been.”

She tried to quit smoking and vaping many times.

“I had been trying very intensely to quit for about four years,” Saucedo said.

Finally, she found new motivation to quit smoking when she began to move in with her partner and stepson.

“I just really didn't want [my stepson] to see me doing it. I really didn't want him to grow up thinking that it was normal, or to just even see it at all. I didn't want to be a bad example for him,” Saucedo said.

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Saucedo Joins the *Quitxt* to Quit Smoking

One day, while visiting her primary care physician, Saucedo came across a flyer for the *Quitxt* service.

“I saw the flyer quite a few times before I finally decided that I wanted to just go for it. And I thought, like, what do I have to lose? Nothing else has worked for me,” she said.

Once Saucedo enrolled in *Quitxt*, she felt the messages held her accountable when it came to quitting smoking and vaping.

“[The *Quitxt* messages] just kept [quitting smoking] at the forefront of my mind. I felt like if I opted out of the program and hit stop, then it was like I was making a conscious effort to give up, to quit,” she said.

Saucedo also said *Quitxt* gave her plenty of inspiration throughout her journey.

The service provides real-time help for cravings, tips to talk yourself out of smoking, video testimonials of people who have successfully quit, and more.

“Some of the messages that [*Quitxt*] sent me really stuck in my head. Some of them I favorited and starred in my phone so that I could see them often,” she said.

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Saucedo's Life Improved After Quitting Smoking

With help from *Quitxt*, Saucedo has been smoke- and vape-free for 3 months.

“Huge improvements, just better lung capacity. I don't feel short of breath just walking up a flight of stairs. I don't have that awful, ugly cough anymore,” she said.

Saucedo also recommends the program to other smokers she knows.

“I definitely would recommend other people to try it out and I kind of use the same reasoning that I used with myself, of like, what do you have to lose?,” Saucedo said.

She encourages people who want to quit smoking to make an action plan and find someone to hold them accountable. For her, *Quitxt* helped her stay accountable.

“Just saying it out loud makes it a lot more real, Saucedo said. “I think it's important for people to have some type of support because vaping is just taking over, and if we don't do anything about it, it's going to just continue to spread.”

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You Can Join Quitxt Today!

To join *Quitxt* in [English](#), text “iquit” to 844-332-2058.

For [Spanish](#), text “lodejo” to 844-332-2058.

More than 1 in 5 *Quitxt* users fully quit smoking after completing the English version of the program, according to a 2017 study.

“There’s no better time than now to stop smoking with help from *Quitxt*,” said Dr. Amelie G. Ramirez, director of the Institute for Health Promotion Research and head of community outreach and engagement team at the Mays Cancer Center at UT Health San Antonio.

“Quitting smoking is proven to improve your health, increase your life span, and save money.”

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