



The boys only know their grandpa from a picture. He died at 55 from a heart attack caused by his heavy smoking.

Heart broken by tobacco. For Tracey Burnet, losing her dad when she was just 11 years old left a hole in her heart that is still causing her pain 30 years later.

“He was only 55 when he died from a massive heart attack – his third – the result of heavy smoking for 30 years.” As the youngest of five children and the only one still living at home at the time of his death, Burnet said his loss changed the dynamics of their family. There were no more family vacations and a cloud of sadness was always there during holidays and get-togethers.

“You grow up really fast,” she said. “You learn life is fragile. All the safety and security of knowing your parents will be there is gone. I had to go through all my major milestones without him.” That includes the birth of her three boys, now 2, 4, and 7 years old. She named the oldest after her dad as one way to keep his memory alive. “If I could talk to someone who smokes I would tell them ‘if you think your smoking is only affecting you, you’re kidding yourself and your wrong. Your smoking affects everyone who loves and cares about you. They will also have to live with the consequences of your smoking.’”

She says there isn’t a day goes by that she doesn’t think of him and feel the profound loss. “I often wonder, if he had understood everything he would miss, would he have tried harder to quit? If supports had been more available, would he have been able to break the addiction? “I have to believe he would have found a way to quit for us. “He would have been an awesome grandpa.”



Need help to get started on your quit journey? Call Health Connection weekdays 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
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