

# Teens and Tobacco

## The Dirty Truth:

### Tobacco Companies Want You

- Tobacco companies need 3,000 new smokers every day. Why? Because 400,000 “customers” die each year from diseases linked to tobacco.
- Tobacco companies spend billions of advertising dollars every year on TV, movies, magazines, billboards, and sporting events. Teens are the main targets of many of these ads.

## The Ugly Truth: Smoking Stinks

- Smoking causes bad breath and stained teeth. Some teens say that kissing a smoker is like licking an ashtray.
- You may not smell smoke on you, but other people do. Smoking often makes people not want to be near you.
- Studies show that most teens would rather date someone who doesn't smoke.

## The Costly Truth: Smoking Costs \$\$\$

YOU do the math!!

Average cost of one pack  
of cigarettes per day                      \$ 5.00

Multiplied by the days in a year      x 365

Yearly cost for cigarettes                \$ 1,825

That's almost **\$2,000** a year! You *could* be spending that on music, clothes, a car, college... whatever.

## The Deadly Truth: Smoking Can Kill

One-third of all new smokers will die from diseases linked to smoking. And nearly 90% of all smokers started when they were teens.

### This is what smoking does to your body:

- It sucks oxygen (air) from your body.
- It makes your lungs turn gray and disgusting.
- Nicotine can make your heart beat faster and not work as well.



### The earlier you start smoking, the greater your risk of:

- Cancer.
- Heart disease.
- Chronic bronchitis (KRAH-nik brahn-KYE-tus)—a serious disease of the airways to the lung.
- Emphysema (em-fuh-ZEE-muh)—a deadly lung disease.

### You breathe in 400 different poisons with every puff. These poisons include:

- Nicotine (pure nicotine can kill).
- Cyanide (a poison).
- Benzene (used in making paints, dyes, and plastics).
- Formaldehyde (used to preserve dead bodies).
- Acetylene (fuel used in torches).
- Ammonia (used in fertilizers).
- Carbon monoxide (the gas in car exhaust).

### Chewing tobacco and snuff (“dip”) aren’t safe either.

Smokeless tobacco raises your risk for mouth problems like gum disease and cancer. You could lose some of your teeth. And you probably won't be able to taste or smell things as well as before.

### Smoking and Sports

Athletes who smoke can't run or swim as well as nonsmoking athletes because their bodies get less oxygen. That's why coaches tell athletes never to smoke.

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## Are You “Hooked”?

People get hooked on cigarettes very soon after they start smoking. You’ll know you’re addicted when:

- You crave cigarettes.
- You feel nervous without cigarettes.
- You try to quit smoking and have trouble doing it.

Quitting can be hard, and it can take a long time. The longer you smoke, the harder it is to stop.

### Myth:

“I won’t smoke forever and I can quit any time.”

### Fact:

Many ex-smokers say, “Quitting tobacco was the hardest thing I’ve ever done!”

## The Happy Truth: It’s Not Too Late

- Most teens don’t smoke. About 80% of teens in the United States don’t smoke. They’ve made a healthy choice.
- If you do smoke, you *can* quit. It’s up to you. Quitting is the best thing you can do for yourself, your friends, and your family.
- Many people who try to quit don’t succeed the first time. If you don’t succeed the first time, keep trying. It may take several tries to quit for good. Get support from your friends and family. Ask for help from your doctor or school health office.

- Your body starts healing as soon as you quit:
  - *After the first day,*  
...your sense of taste and smell begin coming back. And your skin starts to look better.
  - *Within a year,*  
...your risk of heart disease drops by half.
  - *In 10 years,*  
...your risk of lung cancer drops by half.
  - *After 15 smoke-free years,*  
...your odds of living a long and healthy life are almost as good as if you never smoked at all.

## For More Information

- Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids  
1-800-803-7178  
[www.tobaccofreekids.org](http://www.tobaccofreekids.org)
- Telephone Smoking Quitline  
1-800-QUIT-NOW  
(1-800-784-8669)  
[www.naquitline.org](http://www.naquitline.org)
- American Cancer Society  
1-800-ACS-2345 (1-800-227-2345)  
[www.cancer.com](http://www.cancer.com)
- American Heart Association  
1-800-242-8721  
[www.americanheart.org](http://www.americanheart.org)
- American Lung Association  
1-800-586-4872  
[www.lungusa.org](http://www.lungusa.org)

To learn more, visit the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) Web site at [www.aap.org](http://www.aap.org). Your doctor will tell you to do what’s best for you. This information should not take the place of talking with your doctor.

We hope the resources in this handout are helpful. The AAP is not responsible for the information in these resources. We try to keep the information up to date but it may change at any time.

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