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## From the American Cancer Society

### Important Facts for Parents Who Don't Want Their Kids to Smoke

**Nobody was born to smoke. Kids learn how by watching and copying people they admire.**

- Kids whose friends smoke are much more likely to begin smoking. This is especially important in the sixth to eighth grades, and when switching from one school to another.
- Kids often copy things their parents do, and this includes smoking. Parents who smoke also make it easy for their kids to smoke by leaving cigarettes around the house.
- Kids look up to their older brothers and sisters, and often imitate their smoking.
- Each year, the tobacco industry spends \$10 billion on advertising to make smoking look cool.

**Addiction follows soon after kids start smoking. Because they may begin to feel addicted after the first cigarette, any experimentation with cigarettes can be dangerous for kids. This is an important reason why parents should not tolerate any experimentation with smoking.**

- Addiction means that you are no longer able to control your smoking.
- Most kids start to lose control of their smoking within two months of starting.
- More than 90 percent of smokers started before age 18.

**There are ways you can help your child not smoke.**

- If you smoke, think about quitting. If you have tried and failed, remember that most people try to quit a few times before they succeed. Try again using methods that double your chances of success—counseling, medication, and other support.
- Don't allow smoking in your home or car; in this way, your kids won't see people smoking (and won't breathe in secondhand smoke, which is bad for their health).
- Keep your cigarettes out of sight and reach.
- Starting when they are very young, insist that your kids never try smoking.
- Teach your kids why playing around with smoking is dangerous. If you smoke, help them understand what addiction is, and why it is so difficult to quit smoking. When you try to quit, help them understand how you feel.
- Create family rules about which TV programs and movies are OK for your kids. Don't let them watch shows intended for adults, which often include glamorous scenes of smoking.
- Go to one of your local stores, and show your kids tobacco advertising. Tell them why companies advertise—to make money. Discuss what tobacco company ads are trying to convey to consumers; ask whether they think these messages are true. Show them ads in magazines you have around the house that try to convince them to smoke. Take time after watching a movie to discuss the glamorization of smoking.
- Steer kids away from their friends who smoke. You can have some control over which friends your kids hang out with. If they become involved with the wrong group, it's up to you to provide alternative settings where they can make new friends.
- Monitor your kids' smoking status and reward your kids for remaining smoke free. Tell them how proud you are.
- Take it seriously if a child or adolescent of yours starts smoking; it is a decision that could affect the rest of his or her life. There are many ways to go about convincing kids to quit, and how you do it will depend on your style as a parent and your particular child. Here are a few possibilities:
  - Discuss why you don't want them to smoke.
  - Make a fuss; tell them how upset it makes you.
  - Take them to see their doctor.
  - Confiscate their cigarettes.
  - Ask them why they are smoking.
  - Seek help through a quitline.
  - Reward them for quitting.
  - Take away privileges.

To learn more about resources for quitting smoking, call the American Cancer Society at 1-800-ACS-2345.

**Work with other parents to make sure your community encourages children and adolescents to remain smoke free.**

- Tell school administrators that you want strict enforcement of tobacco-free school policies.
- Let your health department and local police department know that you think laws prohibiting the sale of tobacco to children should be strictly enforced.
- Tell the owners of neighborhood stores not to display cigarette ads. Tell them you think it is important to obey the law and not sell cigarettes to minors.
- Support local ordinances for smoke-free public places.

## From the American Cancer Society

### Important Facts for Teens About Smoking

Take the quiz below and see if you're addicted to tobacco.

**If You Have Ever Used Tobacco, Try Asking Yourself These 10 Questions...**

	YES	NO
1) Have you ever tried to quit, but couldn't?		
2) Do you smoke now because it is really hard to quit?		
3) Have you ever felt like you were addicted to tobacco?		
4) Do you ever have strong cravings to smoke?		
5) Have you ever felt like you really needed a cigarette?		
6) Is it hard to keep from smoking in places where you are not supposed to, like school?		
When you tried to stop smoking... (or, when you haven't used tobacco for a while...)		
7) Did you find it hard to concentrate because you couldn't smoke?		
8) Did you feel more irritable because you couldn't smoke?		
9) Did you feel a strong need or urge to smoke?		
10) Did you feel nervous, restless, or anxious because you couldn't smoke?		

If you answered yes to any of these questions, you are hooked on tobacco. Don't wait until you have all 10 before you try to quit. Many teenagers believe that they don't have the willpower to quit. But nicotine addiction isn't just "in your head." Nicotine causes physical changes in your brain. You feel these changes when you quit. Quitting tobacco is often hard, but it is always harder when you go it alone. Don't be too proud to ask for advice. Your doctor is a good place to start.

For more information about tobacco and how it affects you or to get information about quitting, the Web sites listed below are good places to start.

Web address	Topic
<a href="http://www.lungusa.org/tobacco/">http://www.lungusa.org/tobacco/</a>	American Lung Association smoking cessation site
<a href="http://www.quitnet.com/">http://www.quitnet.com/</a>	Quitnet smoking cessation site
<a href="http://www.getoutraged.com/">http://www.getoutraged.com/</a>	Get Outraged is sponsored by the Massachusetts Tobacco Control Program
<a href="http://www.tobaccofreekids.org">http://www.tobaccofreekids.org</a>	Center for Tobacco-Free Kids