
Teens and Smoking: Do You Know the Truth?

Right now, you have a chance to make one of the biggest decisions of your life. It's about smoking. It may not seem like a big deal. But if you start smoking now, there's a good chance that you'll be addicted for life. Think it can't happen to you? Check out these facts.



Facts about smoking

- Smoking is addictive. Even if you only smoke once in a while, you can still get hooked. Once that happens, it's very hard to stop.
- Five out of 6 teens don't smoke. And most teens who do smoke say they wish they could quit.
- Smoking is toxic. A single cigarette contains over 50 chemicals that cause cancer. Some of the chemicals are even used in bug spray.
- Smoking is deadly. One out of every 3 teens who starts smoking will later get sick and die of a smoking-related disease.
- All forms of tobacco are bad for you. This includes cigars, menthols, chewing tobacco, dip, snuff, bidis, "additive-free" cigarettes, and secondhand smoke.
- Every day, almost 2,500 children under age 18 try their first cigarette and about 400 of them become regular, everyday smokers.
- If you don't start smoking by the time you're 18, chances are you'll never start.
- Remember, smoking won't make you attractive. It makes your clothes, hair, and breath smell and it turns your teeth yellow. Long-term use may result in gum disease and tooth loss. It can also cause skin to develop deep wrinkles and sag as you age.

Truth about tobacco ads

Tobacco companies know that most smokers start young. If they can get you to try smoking now, there's a good chance you'll get addicted. That means you'll be putting money in their pockets for the rest of your life. They will say anything to get you to smoke. They use ads that make it seem like smoking is fun and exciting. They hire thin, healthy, good-looking models to sell their products. They do all this because every day, tobacco companies have to replace 3,000 smokers who quit, or die.

To learn more

If you want to learn more about tobacco addiction, visit these websites:

- Tobaccofree Earth www.tobaccofree.org
- Smokefreeteen www.teen.smokefree.gov 877-44U-QUIT (877-448-7848)
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention www.cdc.gov/tobacco/quit_smoking/ 800-QUIT-NOW (800-784-8669)
- American Lung Association www.lung.org/stop-smoking/ 800-LUNGUSA (800-586-4872)
- American Legacy Foundation Truth Campaign www.thetruth.com