



Smoking and E-cigarettes: What Parents Need to Know About the Risks of Tobacco Use

Many people think that the only people harmed by tobacco and nicotine use are smokers who have smoked for a long time. The fact is that tobacco and nicotine use can be harmful to **everyone**. This includes unborn babies and people who don't smoke.

If you smoke cigarettes, cigars, or pipes, or use (vape) e-cigarettes or use smokeless tobacco, such as chew or snuff, the best thing you can do for yourself and for everyone around you is to quit.

Here is information from the American Academy of Pediatrics about the many health risks related to tobacco use and tips for smokers on how to quit.

Facts About Smoking

- Smoking causes 87% of lung cancer deaths. Lung cancer is the leading type of cancer in men and women.
- Every year in this country about 438,000 people die of diseases related to smoking.
- According to the American Cancer Society, smoking kills more people than alcohol, car crashes, suicide, AIDS, murder, and drugs combined.
- About one-third of teen smokers will die of a smoking-related disease.

Smoking and Health Problems

Teen and adult smokers may experience health problems including

- Addiction to nicotine
- Long-term cough
- Faster heart rate
- Lung problems
- Higher blood pressure
- Less stamina and less endurance
- Higher risk of lung cancer and of other cancers
- More respiratory tract infections

Smoking also gives smokers bad breath, yellow teeth, and yellow fingernails; makes hair and clothes smell bad; and wrinkles skin.

Smoking and the Harm to Unborn Babies

Smoking during pregnancy or exposing pregnant women to smoke can lead to many serious health problems for an unborn baby such as

- Miscarriage
- Preterm (premature) birth (born not fully developed)
- Lower birth weight than expected (possibly meaning a less healthy baby)

- SIDS
- Learning problems and attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)

Dangers of Secondhand and Thirdhand Smoke

When parents expose their children to smoke, or let others do so, they are putting their children's health in danger and sending a message that smoking is OK.

Secondhand smoke is the smoke a smoker breathes out. It's also the smoke that comes from the tip of lit cigarettes, lit pipes, or lit cigars. It contains about 4,000 different chemicals, many of which cause cancer. Because of exposure to secondhand smoke, about 3,400 nonsmokers die of lung cancer every year and 22,000 to 69,000 nonsmokers die of heart disease every year.

Breathing in smoke can cause

- Asthma attacks
- Respiratory tract infections (such as bronchitis or pneumonia)
- Lung problems
- Ear infections
- Sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) (for babies younger than 1 year)

Thirdhand smoke is harmful too. It is the smoke left behind—the harmful toxins that stay in places where people have smoked previously.

Thirdhand smoke can be found in walls, on the seats of cars, and even in someone's hair.

The best way to protect babies and children (and other people) from smoke is to make your home and car smoke-free all the time.

Dangers of Alternative Forms of Tobacco

Many people believe that other forms of tobacco, such as e-cigarettes or chewing tobacco, are harmless. This is not true. Nicotine in e-cigarettes is addictive and can harm brain development. E-cigarettes and other tobacco products contain many dangerous chemicals and ingredients that can cause harm to the body.

Facts About Electronic Cigarettes

Electronic cigarettes, also called e-cigarettes, vape pens, or vaping devices, are products that produce an aerosolized mixture containing flavored liquids and nicotine that is inhaled by the user. E-cigarettes can resemble traditional tobacco products, such as cigarettes, or common gadgets, such as flash drives or pens.

Talking With Your Children and Teens About Smoking

Every day thousands of teens try smoking for the first time. Many young people know that smoking is not healthy but still think it's cool. A big reason for this is the media.

Smoking is the most preventable cause of death in the United States. As parents you can help prevent your children from smoking by

- Setting an example by not smoking or taking steps to quit if you are a smoker
- Talking with your children about why smoking is not a healthy choice
- Talking with your children about what they read, watch, or hear in the media about smoking and talking with them about how they can be influenced to try smoking

These products have grown rapidly, particularly among youths (teens and young adults). Youth use of e-cigarettes is a significant public health concern.

Here are some facts.

- E-cigarettes contain nicotine. Youths are especially vulnerable to nicotine addiction because their brains are still developing.
- E-cigarettes come in flavors that are appealing to children.
- Youths who use e-cigarettes are more likely to use traditional tobacco products, such as cigarettes.
- E-cigarettes are not recommended as a way to quit smoking.
- In some cases, e-cigarette devices have exploded, causing burns or fires.
- Long-term health effects on users and bystanders are still unknown.
- E-cigarettes can be used to smoke or vape marijuana, herbs, waxes, or oils.
- E-cigarettes are not approved for smoking cessation by the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

How to Quit

Thousands of Americans have found a way to stop smoking. Quitting can be difficult, but it's not impossible. Here are some tips that might help.

- Think of reasons why you want to quit such as
 - You don't like having bad breath and stained teeth.
 - You don't want to risk getting cancer.
 - You don't like being addicted to nicotine.
 - You want to start leading a healthier life.
 - You do not want to waste your money.
 - Your family and friends don't like it.

- Pick a quit date and throw out all your cigarettes.
- Tell people you are quitting and ask for their support. This includes friends, family members, coworkers, teachers, and coaches. Ask friends not to offer you cigarettes. Invite a friend to quit with you.
- Ask your doctor about ways to quit. Learn all you can about quitting. Many tools are available to help people stop smoking. These include nicotine replacement therapy (if you are old enough) in the form of chewing gum, skin patches, nasal sprays, inhalers, or lozenges; medicine to help curb cravings; counseling (telephone-based, Web-based, or face-to-face); and support groups.
- Break the habit. Think of where and when you usually smoke, and figure out what you can do to break that habit. If you smoke first thing when you wake up, try meditation or doing a few stretches or sit-ups instead. If you smoke after a meal, go for a walk with a family member or friend instead. If you smoke with friends during breaks at work, do something to keep your hands busy. Video games can also help break the habit by keeping both hands occupied.
- Find alternatives to smoking. Drink water or a low-calorie drink, chew sugarless gum, or eat a healthy snack, such as sunflower seeds or apple slices. Plan ahead and be ready for the challenges you'll face while quitting.
- Keep your mind busy. Find activities to keep your mind off smoking such as working on a hobby, listening to music, talking to a friend, or exercising.
- Reward yourself. Take the money that you would have spent on tobacco and buy something for yourself.

Resources

American Academy of Pediatrics
Julius B. Richmond Center of Excellence
AAP.org/RichmondCenter

American Cancer Society
800/ACS-2345 (800/227-2345)
www.cancer.org

American Lung Association
800/LUNG-USA (800/586-4872)
www.lungusa.org

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
www.cdc.gov/tobacco/quit_smoking/index.htm

Smokefree.gov
800/QUIT-NOW (800/784-8669)
www.smokefree.gov

Surgeon General
https://e-cigarettes.surgeongeneral.gov

Surgeon General Report "Preventing Tobacco Use Among Youth and Young Adults" (Consumer Booklet)
www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/sgr/2012/consumer_booklet/pdfs/consumer.pdf

Truth Initiative
www.truthinitiative.org

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