

**Everyone please remember that on the 31 of May 2010 is WORLD NO TOBACCO DAY.**

### **Information about Smoking**

**Do you smoke?** Have you ever stopped to think about how smoking is affecting your body and your life? Most teens are aware that people who have smoked for awhile can get lung cancer and emphysema and eventually die, but many don't know about all of the bad things that smoking can do to them right now. If you smoke, you owe it to yourself to find out about the effects of smoking on your life now. This guide provides some information about what smoking is doing to your body and some of the common reasons why people keep smoking even though they know it's bad for them. These are important things to think about to help you decide if you should continue smoking.

### **Why is cigarette smoking bad for me?**

Everyone knows that smoking can cause cancer when you get older, but did you know that it also has bad effects on your body right now? A cigarette contains about 4000 chemicals, many of which are poisonous. Some of the worst ones are:

- **Nicotine: a deadly poison**
- **Arsenic: used in rat poison**
- **Methane: a component of rocket fuel**
- **Ammonia: found in floor cleaner**
- **Cadmium: used in batteries**

- **Carbon Monoxide: part of car exhaust**
- **Formaldehyde: used to preserve body tissue**
- **Butane: lighter fluid**
- **Hydrogen Cyanide: the poison used in gas chambers**

Every time you inhale smoke from a cigarette, small amounts of these chemicals get into your blood through your lungs. They travel to all the parts of your body and cause harm.

### **What do all these chemicals do to my body?**

As you might imagine, even small amounts of the poisonous chemicals in cigarettes can do bad things to your body. **Here are some facts about what smoking cigarettes does to you:**

- ✚ Smoking makes you smell bad, gives you wrinkles, stains your teeth, and gives you bad breath.
- ✚ Smokers get 3 times more cavities than non-smokers.
- ✚ Smoking lowers your hormone levels.
- ✚ When smokers catch a cold, they are more likely than non-smokers to have a cough that lasts a long time. They are also more likely than non-smokers to get bronchitis and pneumonia.
- ✚ Teen smokers have smaller lungs and a weaker heart than teen non-smokers. They also get sick more often than teens who don't smoke.

### **What happens to my lungs when I smoke?**

Every time you inhale smoke from a cigarette, you kill some of the air sacks in your lungs, called alveoli. These air sacks are where the oxygen that you breathe in is transferred into your blood. Alveoli don't grow back, so when you destroy them, you have permanently destroyed part of your lungs. This means that you

won't do as well in activities where breathing is important, like sports, dancing, or singing.

Smoking paralyzes the cilia that line your lungs. Cilia are little hair like structures that move back and forth to sweep particles out of your lungs. When you smoke, the cilia can't move and can't do their job. So dust, pollen, and other things that you inhale sit in your lungs and build up. Also, there are a lot of particles in smoke that get into your lungs. Since your cilia are paralyzed because of the smoke and can't clean them out, the particles sit in your lungs and form tar.

### **I know smoking is bad for me, but I really like it.**

Many teens like the feeling that smoking gives them. This good feeling is from the nicotine in the cigarettes. Some teens think smoking will help them lose weight or stay thin. Many teens also feel like smoking gives them a sense of freedom and independence, and some smoke to feel more comfortable in social situations. If this sounds like you, **you should stop and think about whether the things you like about smoking are really worth the risks.**

✚ Nicotine can make you feel good, but is feeling good (a feeling you can also get from healthy activities like playing sports) really worth all the bad things cigarettes do to you? If you smoke, you'll get sick more often. You also have the chance of getting lung cancer or emphysema, which will make you really sick for a long time before you die. If you are very sick, that good feeling from nicotine won't seem so important anymore.

- ✚ Smoking doesn't really help people lose weight. If that were true, every smoker would be thin.
- ✚ Smoking lowers your hormone levels.

### **Do you think that smoking is a sign that you can do what you want? That you are in control of your life?**

Think about it this way: When you decide to start smoking, you are doing exactly what tobacco companies want you to do. They spend millions of dollars every year on advertising to try to get new people, especially teens, to smoke. Once they have you hooked, THEY are controlling YOU. You are forced to buy their products in order to support your addiction. Do you really want a big corporation controlling your life and telling you how to spend your money?

### **Why should I stop smoking if I'm not addicted?**

Many people don't realize they are addicted to smoking. They think they can easily quit any time they want. But when they try, they forget it is extremely difficult. Unfortunately, it is very easy to get addicted. Cigarettes are just as addictive as cocaine or heroin. Even if you only smoke one or two cigarettes a day and even if you've never bought a pack of cigarettes yourself, you are at risk. Stressful situations or hanging out with friends who smoke might cause you to smoke more and become addicted. Try going a whole week without smoking at all. If you find this difficult, you are probably addicted to cigarettes.

## If I quit smoking, won't I gain weight?

Many people are afraid to quit smoking because they think they will gain weight. In reality, many do gain a little but not enough to change how they look. People don't gain weight because they stop smoking. They gain weight because they start eating more. Often, people confuse the feeling of craving nicotine with hunger and eat to try to make this uncomfortable feeling go away. Smokers are also used to having something in their hands and in their mouth, so they may pick up food to replace holding a cigarette. To keep from gaining weight, try these things:

- ✚ Drink sips of water instead of eating when you feel uncomfortable.
- ✚ Eat carrot or celery sticks or other healthy, low calorie foods.
- ✚ Exercise. This will also help take your mind off smoking and make you healthier.
- ✚ Keep busy. You will be less likely to eat when you're not really hungry if you are doing other things.

## I'll quit in a year or two when I'm ready.

A lot of people put off quitting smoking, thinking that they'll do it when the time is right. Only 5% of teens think they will still be smoking in 5 years. Actually, about 75% of them are still smoking more than five years later. If you smoke, it will never seem like the right time to quit and quitting will never be easy. The longer you smoke, the harder it will be to stop and the more damage you will do to your body. **Here are some reasons to quit sooner rather than later:**

- ✚ Most teens would rather date a non-smoker.
- ✚ You'll save money if you quit smoking. A pack of cigarettes costs about \$5.00. Even if you only smoke a couple packs a week,

you're spending about \$40 per month and \$480 per year on smoking. Think of all the other things you could use that money for.

- ✚ You only have one pair of lungs. Any damage you do to them now will be with you for the rest of your life.
- ✚ The longer you smoke, the better your chances are of dying from it. One out of 3 smokers die from smoking and many more become very sick. Think about your friends who smoke. 1/3 of them will die from smoking if none of you quit

**Smoking can have serious effects on your life. The longer you smoke the more damage you do to your body and your health. Most people who begin smoking as teens say that they wish they had never started. The decision to start or continue smoking is all up to you and no one can make you stop, but you should think really hard about whether it is the best thing for your body and your life.**

**FOR MORE INFORMATION: PLEASE CONTACT:**

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