



## Parenting for Prevention: Tobacco

### About Tobacco

- Tobacco use is the most preventable cause of disease, disability, and death in the United States.
- Tobacco smoke contains more than 7,000 chemicals - about 70 of these chemicals can cause cancer.
- Each day, more than 3,200 people under 18 smoke their first cigarette.
- Most smokers try their first cigarette around the age of 11 and many are addicted by the time they turn 14. However, if young people don't start using tobacco by age 26, they almost certainly will never start.
- Nicotine is an addictive chemical found in tobacco. Someone can get addicted to Nicotine within days of first using it.
- Nicotine causes a rush of adrenaline when absorbed in the bloodstream or inhaled via cigarette smoke and triggers an increase in dopamine - the brain's "happy" chemical.
- Other Tobacco Products (OTP) are products that contain nicotine, but are not cigarettes. E-cigarettes, cigars, pipe tobacco, snuff, chewing tobacco, snus, and dissolvables are examples of other tobacco products.
- It's not only cigarettes that are harmful. Smokeless tobacco contains 28 cancer-causing chemicals. E-cigarettes (battery-powered electronic cigarettes that convert nicotine into an odorless vapor) may contain ingredients that are toxic to humans. Other tobacco products can cause cancer, heart disease and other health issues.

### FAST FACTS

Here are a few of the chemicals found in tobacco smoke and in other common products.

**Acetone:** nail polish remover

**Acetic Acid:** hair dye

**Ammonia:** household cleaners

**Arsenic:** rat poison

**Benzene:** rubber cement

**Butane:** lighter fluid

**Cadmium:** battery acid

**Carbon Monoxide:** car exhaust

**Formaldehyde:** embalming fluid

**Hexamine:** barbecue lighter fluid

**Lead:** batteries

**Naphthalene:** moth balls

**Methanol:** rocket fuel

**Nicotine:** insecticide

**Tar:** roadways

**Toluene:** paint

### What Parents Need to Know

**Media literacy** – the ability to analyze and evaluate different forms of media – is a powerful tool in helping prevent youth tobacco use. Media literacy helps the consumer become knowledgeable and competent about media's intent; enabling them to control the interpretation of the messages they see and hear. When young people understand how tobacco companies use youth-targeted advertising and media to encourage smoking and the use of other tobacco products, they are better equipped to make the healthy choice to avoid smoking, or using smokeless tobacco or other tobacco products.

For example, cigarette companies shape their advertising campaigns to portray smokers as cool, sexy, independent, fun, attractive, and living on the edge. Magazine, billboard and poster advertisements never show the negative effects of smoking or tobacco use. As a result, many teens try smoking because they find the images alluring and subsequently get hooked. Only 5% of high-school-age smokers believe they'll still be smoking 5 years after graduation but they don't understand how difficult quitting can be. Research shows that after 8 years, 75% of those smokers will still be using some form of tobacco.

The tobacco industry uses deceptive marketing practices to hook young people on Other Tobacco Products. These products are made to attract a young audience. They are infused with sweet or fruity flavors; are priced cheaply; and readily available at convenience stores – often next to candy and gum. (Beginning January 2015, Ashland adopted regulations that banned the sale of flavored tobacco products in facilities that allow the entry of customers under the age of 21).

Help your child identify the tactics that tobacco companies use to make smoking and smokeless tobacco look appealing. Kids don't like to be tricked – and that's exactly what these advertisements are doing. Talk with them about the real harm of using tobacco products and praise them for their healthy choices.

# Risks of Smoking & Other Tobacco Products

**All tobacco products have a negative impact on human health. While communicating short-term effects is typically a stronger deterrent for youth, it is also important to convey the lifelong impact of tobacco use.**

## Short-Term Effects of Smoking

- Throat irritation, coughing
- Bad breath, stained teeth
- Shortness of breath, decreased athletic performance
- Greater susceptibility to colds/respiratory illness
- Impaired lung growth and function

## Long-Term Risks of Smoking

- Nicotine dependence/powerful addiction
- Lung, mouth, throat, kidney, stomach and colorectal cancers
- Coronary heart disease
- Emphysema and other chronic diseases
- Type 2 diabetes

## Risks of Other Tobacco Products

- Gum disease, tooth decay
- Nicotine addiction and dependence
- Subsequent cigarette use
- Oral and pancreatic cancer
- Heart disease



## Talking Tips: How to Start a Conversation

*Children are exposed to cigarettes at an early age – at home, in public, or through advertisements. Children as young as 5 can understand that smoking is unhealthy. Talk with them now about the risks of tobacco use. Keep talking through their teen years when peer & environmental influences become more prevalent.*

- Be direct with your children that you don't want them to smoke cigarettes or use smokeless tobacco. Give clear, consistent messages about the risks of smoking, tobacco and nicotine.
- Discuss it in a way that doesn't make children fear punishment or judgment. Ask them what they find attractive or unattractive about smoking. Be a patient listener. Show that you value your child's opinions and ideas, but be firm about your rules.
- Establish firm no smoking & chewing tobacco policies in your home. Explain the health dangers and negative physical effects.
- Talk to them about the immediate effects of smoking – your clothes, hair and breath smell bad; it can be difficult to play or participate in sports; it can make you cough, gag or feel queasy.
- Emphasize the healthy choices your child is already making.
- Discuss how to respond to peer pressure to smoke or use smokeless tobacco. Your child may feel confident saying "no", but also offer alternative responses such as "My clothes and breath will smell bad" or "I hate the way it makes me look."
- If you are a parent who smokes, the best thing you can do is to quit. Explain how difficult it is to quit smoking and how much easier it would have been if you had never started smoking in the first place. For help, contact the MA Smokers Helpline at 1-800-QUITNOW or ask your doctor to refer you to QuitWorks.org
- Try the CDC's Parent Conversation Card for more talking tips: [cdc.gov/tobacco/data\\_statistics/sgr/2012/pdfs/parent\\_card508.pdf](http://cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/sgr/2012/pdfs/parent_card508.pdf)

## RESOURCES

### Tobacco Free Kids

[www.tobaccofreekids.org/National Institute on Drug Abuse](http://www.tobaccofreekids.org/National%20Institute%20on%20Drug%20Abuse)

### Kids Health

<http://kidshealth.org/parent/positive/talk/smoking.html>

### BeTobaccoFree.gov

<http://betobaccofree.hhs.gov/about-tobacco/facts-figures/>

### Parent Further.com

[www.parentfurther.com/high-risk-behaviors/tobacco/effects](http://www.parentfurther.com/high-risk-behaviors/tobacco/effects)

### Healthline.com

[www.healthline.com/](http://www.healthline.com/)

### American Lung Association: Parent Tips

<http://www.lung.org/stop-smoking/about-smoking/preventing-smoking/for-parents.html>

### Centers for Disease Control & Prevention

[www.cdc.gov/tobacco/osh/index.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/osh/index.htm)

### Centers for Disease Control & Prevention: Youth Information Sheet

[www.cdc.gov/tobacco/youth/information\\_sheet/MA](http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/youth/information_sheet/MA)

### MakeSmokingHistory

[www.makesmokinghistory.org/](http://www.makesmokinghistory.org/)

### The84 (for teens)

[www.the84.org](http://www.the84.org)

Parenting for Prevention is a Decisions at Every Turn Coalition educational series for parents and other caring adults to increase awareness and knowledge about important youth issues and to encourage dialogue about making healthy choices.

Please visit <http://www.AshlandDecisions.org/parent-tip-sheets.html> for our complete library of tip sheets.

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