

# TIPS for TEENS

## TOBACCO USE

### THE TRUTH ABOUT TOBACCO USE

**SLANG FOR CIGARETTES:**  
**SMOKES/CIGS/BUTTS**

**SLANG FOR SMOKELESS TOBACCO:**  
**CHEW/DIP/SPIT TOBACCO/SNUFF**

## GET THE FACTS

**TOBACCO USE DAMAGES YOUR HEALTH.** Smoking, which is the most common cause of lung cancer, is also a leading cause of cancer of the mouth, throat, bladder, pancreas, and kidneys.<sup>1</sup>

**TOBACCO USE AFFECTS YOUR BODY'S DEVELOPMENT.** Smoking—including vaping, cigars, and hookah use—is particularly harmful for teens because your body is still growing and changing. Evidence shows that smoking has an impact on nearly every organ in a person's body.<sup>2</sup>

**TOBACCO CONTAINS ADDICTIVE INGREDIENTS.** Tobacco is a plant grown for its leaves, which are dried and fermented to put in tobacco products. It contains nicotine, an ingredient that can lead to addiction. The younger you are when you begin to smoke, the more likely you are to become addicted to nicotine.<sup>3</sup> According to the 2014 *Surgeon General's Report*, nearly 9 out of 10 adult smokers first tried smoking before age 18.<sup>4</sup>

**TOBACCO USE CAN KILL YOU.** Cigarette smoking is responsible for about 480,000 deaths per year in the U.S.<sup>5</sup> Worldwide, tobacco smoking and secondhand smoke combined cause nearly 7 million deaths per year.<sup>6</sup>

## ? Q&A

**Q. ISN'T SMOKING COOL?**

**A.** Advertisements often portray smoking as glamorous and sophisticated, but these ads are created to sell products and use youth-oriented themes.

**Q. IS SMOKELESS TOBACCO SAFE?**

**A. NO.** No form of smokeless tobacco is safe. It contains at least 30 chemicals that are known to cause cancer.<sup>7</sup>

**Q. DO MOST TEENS SMOKE?**

**A. NO.** Although the majority of teens don't smoke,<sup>8</sup> it's important to remember that cigarette use among teens is still harmful and should be prevented from becoming more popular.

**Q. DOESN'T SMOKING HELP YOU RELAX?**

**A. NO.** Use strategies such as exercise or talking to your friends to help calm your nerves.<sup>9</sup>

### THE BOTTOM LINE:

Tobacco use is dangerous and can be deadly. Talk to your parents, a doctor, a counselor, a teacher, or another adult you trust if you have questions.

### LEARN MORE:

Get the latest information on how drugs affect the brain and body at [teens.drugabuse.gov](https://teens.drugabuse.gov).

### TO LEARN MORE ABOUT TOBACCO, CONTACT:

**SAMHSA**

**1-877-SAMHSA-7 (1-877-726-4727)**

(English and Español)

**TTY 1-800-487-4889**

**[www.samhsa.gov](https://www.samhsa.gov)**

**[store.samhsa.gov](https://store.samhsa.gov)**



**SAMHSA**  
Substance Abuse and Mental Health  
Services Administration

# BEFORE YOU RISK IT!

- 1 KNOW THE LAW.** It is illegal for anyone under 18 to buy cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, or tobacco-related products. As of September 2018, six states and at least 350 localities have raised the minimum age to 21.
- 2 STAY INFORMED.** Young people often underestimate the addictiveness of nicotine and the effect of tobacco use on their health. This is why quitting can be difficult. A recent report revealed that about 45 percent of high school cigarette smokers tried to stop smoking in the past 12 months.<sup>10</sup>
- 3 BE AWARE.** It can be hard to play sports if you use tobacco. Smoking causes diseases that result in shortness of breath and dizziness.<sup>11</sup>
- 4 THINK OF OTHERS.** More than 41,000 nonsmokers die every year due to secondhand smoke exposure.<sup>12</sup> Secondhand smoke causes nearly 34,000 premature deaths from heart disease and more than 8,000 deaths from stroke each year in the United States among nonsmokers.<sup>13</sup>
- 5 GET THE FACTS.** Each day, about 1,700 people between the ages of 12 and 17 start smoking.<sup>14</sup> Many will suffer long-term health consequences.<sup>15</sup>

## MORE INFORMATION

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR FOR RESOURCES USED IN THIS

### "TIPS for TEENS,"

visit [store.samhsa.gov](http://store.samhsa.gov) or call  
**1-877-SAMHSA-7 (1-877-726-4727)**  
(English and Español).

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## KNOW THE SIGNS

How can you tell if a friend is using tobacco? Symptoms of tobacco use may include:<sup>16</sup>

- Coughing
- Bad breath
- Smelly hair and clothes
- Yellow-stained teeth and fingers
- Frequent colds
- Bleeding gums (smokeless tobacco)
- Frequent mouth sores (smokeless tobacco)



## WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP SOMEONE WHO IS USING TOBACCO?

### BE A FRIEND. SAVE A LIFE.

Encourage your friend to stop using or seek help from a parent, teacher, or other caring adult.

For 24/7 free and confidential information and treatment referrals in English and Español, call SAMHSA's National Helpline at:

**1-800-662-HELP (1-800-662-4357)**  
or visit the SAMHSA Behavioral Health Treatment Services Locator at:  
[findtreatment.samhsa.gov](http://findtreatment.samhsa.gov)

<sup>1</sup> National Cancer Institute. (2017). Harms of Cigarette Smoking and Health Benefits of Quitting. Retrieved from <https://www.cancer.gov/about-cancer/causes-prevention/risk/tobacco/cessation-fact-sheet>

<sup>2,4,5,12,13,15</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2014). *The health consequences of smoking: 50 years of progress. A report of the surgeon general*. Retrieved from <https://www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/reports/50-years-of-progress/full-report.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> American Cancer Society. (2015). Why People Start Smoking and Why It's Hard to Stop. Retrieved from <https://www.cancer.org/cancer/cancer-causes/tobacco-and-cancer/why-people-start-using-tobacco.html>

<sup>6</sup> World Health Organization. (2011). WHO Report on the Global Tobacco Epidemic. Retrieved from [http://www.who.int/tobacco/global\\_report/2011/en/](http://www.who.int/tobacco/global_report/2011/en/)

<sup>7</sup> American Cancer Society. (2015). Health Risks of Smokeless Tobacco. Retrieved from <https://www.cancer.org/cancer/cancer-causes/tobacco-and-cancer/smokeless-tobacco.html>

<sup>8,14</sup> Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2018). *Key substance use and mental health indicators in the United States: Results from the 2017 National Survey on Drug Use and Health* (HHS Publication No. SMA 18-5068, NSDUH Series H-53). Retrieved from <https://www.samhsa.gov/data/sites/default/files/cbhsq-reports/NSDUHFFR2017/NSDUHFFR2017pdf>

<sup>9</sup> Smokefree.gov. (2017). Stress and Smoking. Retrieved from [https://smokefree.gov/challenges-when-quitting/stress-mood/stress-smoking](https://smokefree.gov/challenges-when-quit/when-quitting/stress-mood/stress-smoking)

<sup>10</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2016). Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance—United States, 2015. *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, 66(SS-6):1-174. Retrieved from [https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/data/yrbs/pdf/2015/ss6506\\_updated.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/data/yrbs/pdf/2015/ss6506_updated.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> American Lung Association. (2016). Shortness of Breath Symptoms, Causes and Risk Factors. Retrieved from <http://www.lung.org/lung-health-and-diseases/lung-disease-lookup/shortness-of-breath/shortness-breath-symptoms-risks.html>

<sup>16</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2009). What You(th) Should Know About Tobacco. Retrieved from [https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/basic\\_information/youth/information-sheet/index.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/basic_information/youth/information-sheet/index.htm)