

# Of Interest

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### Raising Kids that Don't Smoke

by Liz Ashe

A recent national survey of teenagers found that 18 percent reported that they had smoked at least one cigarette before they were 13 years old. (Center for Disease Control and Prevention 2005)

As a parent, you play a critical role in helping prevent children from using tobacco. It is extremely important to talk with your children often about not smoking and make your values and beliefs very clear. On issues related to smoking, pre-teens are more influenced by their parents than by their friends. Your opinions and guidance really count during this stage of your child's development. Your children may act bored, but they listen. According to Philip Morris USA (Youth Smoking Prevention 2005), 79% of 11-14 year-olds and 73% of 15-17 year-olds say that one of the reasons they don't smoke is because "My parents don't approve."

Take advantage of natural opportunities to talk about not smoking, such as when you encounter a "no smoking" sign in a building or when you come in contact with someone who has a smoky smell on their clothes or breath.

### Things to Talk About

- Let your child know that smoking is not common today and that the large majority of teens do not smoke and why they choose not to do it.
- Tell them that smoking is not a sign of maturity and that most adults today are non-smokers.
- Explain how using tobacco limits how well they perform in sports and other physical activities. Describe tobacco's affect on stamina and breathing, especially during competition or performance.
- Discuss the addictive properties of tobacco and that most smokers wish they had never started smoking because quitting is so hard. The younger a person starts smoking, the more likely they are to become addicted. (Center for Disease Control and Prevention 2005)

continued

### Smoking Prevention Resources

**American Cancer Society**  
www.cancer.org

**Center for Disease Control and Prevention**  
www.cdc.gov/tobacco

**American Lung Association**  
www.lungusa.org

**Office of the Surgeon General**  
www.surgeongeneral.gov

**Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration "What you Need to Know: Younger Students Still Smoking"**  
<http://family.samhsa.gov/set/stillsmoking.aspx>

**Quit Net**  
<http://www.quitnet.com>

**Professional Assisted Cessation Therapy**  
<http://www.endsmoking.org>

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continued

## Talking with Your Child Continued

- Calculate how much money cigarettes cost and emphasize how they will have less money to spend on entertainment and things they want if they buy cigarettes.
- Be sure to discuss often, the health risks of smoking, especially the long-term consequences such as heart disease, esophageal or lung cancer, allergies, bronchitis, circulation deficiencies, emphysema, arteriosclerosis, lung disease, gingivitis, hypertension, chronic coughing, strokes, peptic ulcers, phlebitis and blood clots with a vein, wrinkles, fetal smoking syndrome and other health problems.

## Prevent Access to Cigarettes

Another key to preventing children from smoking is restricting their access to tobacco. Teenagers and pre-teens get their cigarettes from a variety of sources. Many take them from a friend, a parent, or an older sibling. Others get an older friend to buy them for them. According to the 2003 Monitoring the Future national survey of youth, (Johnson et. al.) 63% of 8th graders and 81% of 10th graders said that it would be “fairly easy” or “very easy” for them to get cigarettes if they wanted them. (NIH publication No. 04-5506).

If you find your child is getting cigarettes from a friend, you could talk to that friend’s parent about the situation. You may be able to work together to solve the problem.

If you or another family member is a smoker, don’t leave cigarette packs around the house unattended or in other places where it is easy for children to find them.

Children whose friends smoke are more likely to have tried cigarettes themselves. If you notice that some of your child’s friends are smoking, you may want to discuss ways to resist peer pressure and that is okay to say no if offered a cigarette.

## Reference:

Philip Morris Tip Sheets. As a manufacturer of a product intended for adults who smoke that has serious health effects, Philip Morris USA is committed to helping prevent kids from smoking cigarettes. They have a dedicated Youth Smoking Prevention department that supports positive youth development programs, produces advertising for parents and conducts research to help prevent youth smoking. For more information visit the Parent Resource Center on their web site - [www.philipmorrisusa.com](http://www.philipmorrisusa.com). You can also order free Tip Sheet publications by calling 1.800.768.7297.

## Tips For Anyone to Quit Smoking

1. Make a list of the benefits of being smoke-free such as disease risk prevention, more energy and stamina, saved money, better breathing and less standing outside in the cold on breaks.
2. Set a Quit Date. Try not to pick a day that is characteristically stressful, on a holiday or family get together or party.
3. Make a contract. Write up a smoke-free contract. Sign it and have it witnessed by someone who wants you to quit.
4. Get Support. Try to find a person you can call if you get the urge to smoke. Take advantage of any smoking cessation programs in your workplace. There are also ex-smokers support groups.
5. Plan Your “Survival Kit.” You will need to identify substitutes (not food) for the pleasure of smoking. You can take advantage of low-calories snacks, raw vegetables, gum, or straws or toothpicks to give you oral satisfaction. You can keep your hands busy with puzzles, pencils, or coffee stirrers.
6. Pick a method that will be most effective for you such as tapering off, quitting cold turkey or nicotine replacement aids. Talk to your doctor about nicotine replacement aids to ease you through the worst of withdrawal symptoms.
7. Stay away from temptation or situations or people that trigger your desire for a cigarette. Alcohol can weaken your resolve so you may want to avoid drinking for a while.
8. Anticipate withdrawal symptoms such as irritability, insomnia, increased appetite, nervousness and stress, fatigue and listlessness.
9. Keep track of your success, one day at a time. Celebrate your milestones, weeks, months, and reward yourself for staying smoke free.

**If you are having problems,  
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