

Help your child stay smoke-free:

A GUIDE TO PROTECTING YOUR CHILD AGAINST TOBACCO USE



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As a parent, you want your child to grow into a healthy and happy adult.



A MESSAGE TO PARENTS

As a parent, you want your child to grow into a healthy and happy adult. You care about your child's health and want to ensure that your child will stay safe and make healthy choices. One of the most important choices your child will make is whether or not to use tobacco.

In Canada, one out of four youth in grades five to nine report trying smoking¹ and it is estimated that almost one in three students in grades 7 to 9 are involved with smoking in some way². Every day in Canada youth make the choice to try using tobacco and the odds are that many of them will become regular users ■

fast facts

Some facts about youth and tobacco

- Youth smokers suffer more from coughs, asthma, chest colds and bronchitis³.
- Youth who start smoking at a young age increase their chances of becoming addicted to nicotine and continuing to smoke as adults⁴.
- Early signs of future heart disease can be found in youth who smoke⁵.
- Smoking can slow the growth of young people's lungs and can affect their breathing when they play games and sports⁶.
- Studies have shown that youth who are exposed to both a family member and a best friend who smoke have a 90% greater chance of smoking than youth who are not in the same situation⁷.
- Youth who smoke are more likely to also use alcohol or other drugs such as cocaine and marijuana⁸.
- Most youth who smoke want to quit but few succeed⁹.
- Many young people do not know that smokeless tobacco is a dangerous alternative to cigarettes. Even short term adolescent users of smokeless tobacco have early signs of gum disease¹⁰.

By acting as a positive role model and following good parenting practices, you can help your child beat these odds. This guide will give you practical tips about how to raise children to be free from tobacco. It provides helpful advice and information about how you can support your child to remain tobacco-free as they pass through each new age and stage of childhood and the teenage years.

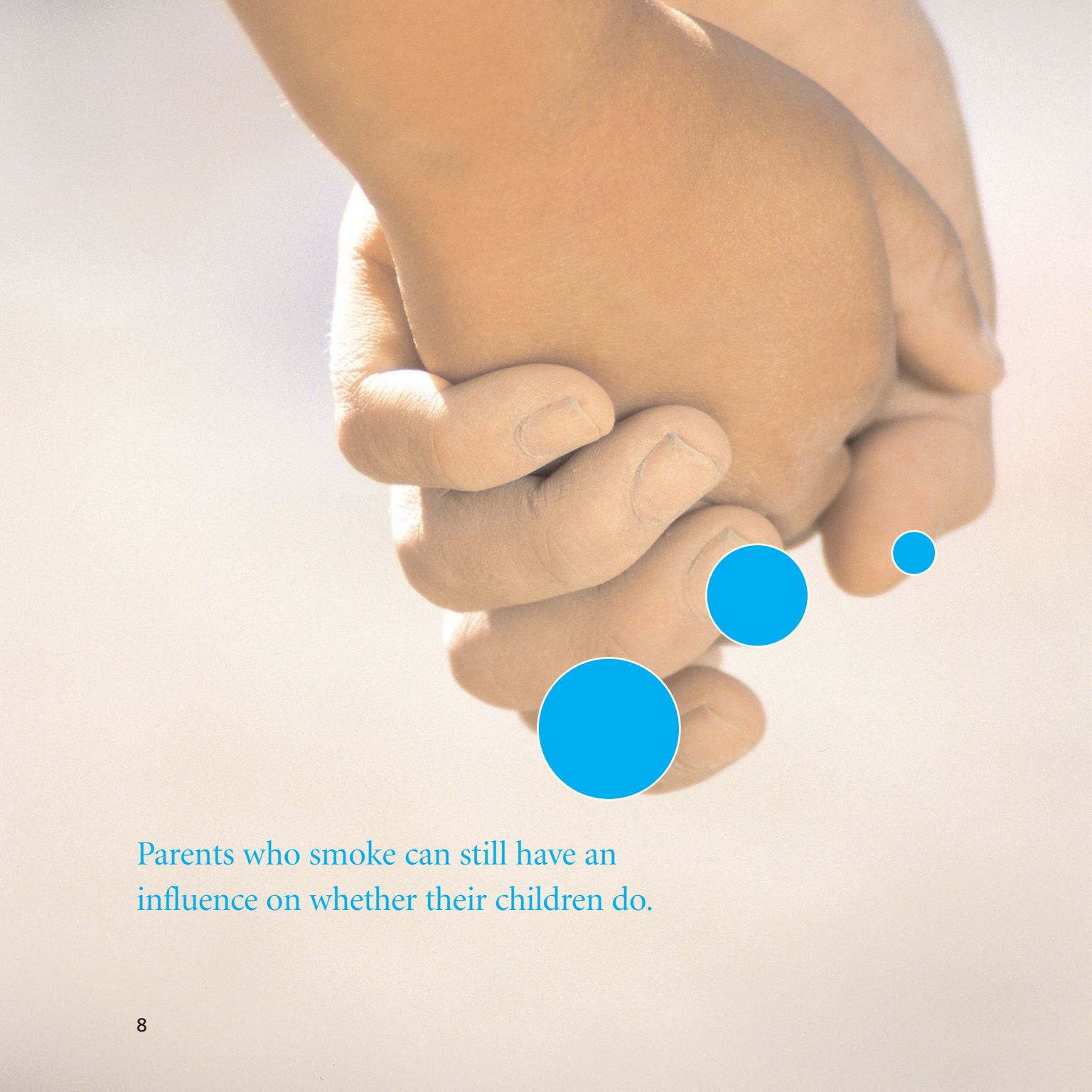
"THERE IS NOTHING I CAN DO"

Many parents believe there is not much they can do to influence whether their child smokes. Do any of these myths sound familiar?

MYTH #1: "I don't need to worry, I am sure my children will never smoke."

This is a very common misunderstanding, often held by parents who don't smoke. While it's true that children of parents who don't smoke are less likely to take up the habit, you should be aware that your child may still be tempted to use tobacco in some way. Talking openly with your children about tobacco use will play an important role in keeping them tobacco-free. Studies have shown that children and teens value their parents' opinions and want parents and other adults to take a stand against tobacco.

If you don't smoke, keep in mind that your behaviour alone is not a guarantee that your child will not. You still need to raise the issue and talk about the dangers of smoking. You will also need to prepare yourself for the possibility that your child may decide to smoke or use some other form of tobacco. Non-smoking parents whose children smoke may have a tougher time understanding their child's smoking and may have trouble dealing with the issue.



Parents who smoke can still have an influence on whether their children do.

MYTH #2: “Why should I bother to tell my children not to smoke? They won’t listen to me anyway.”

There is no getting around the fact that as most children grow older, what their parents say becomes less important than what their friends say. However, the good news is that you can influence your child not just by what you say, but also by what you do. Research has shown that what parents do around their children has more influence than what they say. By modeling healthy behaviours such as restricting smoking at home or choosing to sit in smoke-free sections at restaurants, you can have a strong influence on your child’s decision not to smoke.

MYTH #3: “I smoke. My children won’t believe me if I tell them smoking is harmful.”

Parents who smoke can still have an influence on whether their children do. Children often don’t understand that smoking is a powerful addiction and it is extremely difficult to quit. As a smoker, you understand more than most about the powerful addiction of nicotine and its high cost in terms of both your budget and your personal health. Tell your child about how you got hooked on tobacco and how hard it is to quit. Tell them what it costs financially, socially and health-wise. Research has shown that when parents who smoke talk to their children about their habit, their children are much less likely to smoke themselves.

If you have been unable to quit, perhaps now is the time to seriously consider it again. The earlier you quit, the less likely it is that your child will smoke regularly. For information on quitting smoking, please refer to Section 6 of this booklet.

MYTH #4: My child would never touch a cigarette.

Unfortunately, just because your child is not smoking cigarettes does not mean they are not using tobacco. In Canada, 6% of youth aged 15-19 years report using smokeless tobacco (chewing tobacco or snuff). Many young people don't realize that smokeless tobacco is just as dangerous as smoking cigarettes.

MYTH #5: Tobacco is less risky than other things my children could do.

Some parents think that tobacco is less dangerous than other things youth can do such as drinking alcohol or driving above the speed limit. This is not true. Both smoking and chewing tobacco use result in many harmful short and long term health effects. In addition, studies have shown that youth who use tobacco are more likely to engage in other risk taking behaviours and are also more likely to move on to using drugs such as marijuana and cocaine ■

TOBACCO: WHERE DO YOU STAND?

It's important to understand the reasons why you want your child to stay tobacco-free. Your first step will be to get informed and stay informed. Here are a few reasons why tobacco is harmful:





know the facts

- Tobacco smoke is a deadly cancer causing agent which contains over 4,000 chemicals including over 40 known carcinogens.
- Approximately half of all smokers die from a smoking-related illness—cancer, heart disease and other conditions.
- Over 47,500 Canadians died in 1998 as a result of smoking related diseases such as cancer, heart and respiratory disease.
- The average smoker may die about ten years earlier than a similar non-smoker. Life expectancy improves after a smoker quits.
- There is strong scientific evidence that smoking is related to more than two dozen diseases and conditions including heart attacks, circulatory problems, high blood pressure, lung cancer, oral cancer, bronchitis, ulcers and even the common cold.
- Smokeless tobacco contains 28 cancer-causing agents (carcinogens). It is a known cause of human cancer, as it increases the risk of developing cancer of the oral cavity.

If you are interested in finding out more about tobacco and its harmful effects, see Section 6 of this guide for more resources ■

A G E S & S T A G E S

As children grow, their view of the world changes. When they are young, children look to their parents to help them make decisions about how to act.

As they get older, they become more independent and begin to seek new role models such as friends, older siblings and the stars of movies and shows they watch on TV.

Children also pass through stages in their awareness and use of tobacco. These include: forming attitudes and beliefs about tobacco, trying, experimenting with and regularly using tobacco and finally, becoming addicted. This process generally takes about three years.

In addition, research has shown that as children pass through transition periods such as from elementary to junior high school they may change their behaviour and may be more likely to start to smoke. It will be very important that you continue to talk to your child about tobacco throughout childhood and especially as they move from one stage of life to the next.



You know your child best and will have a better sense of how to approach them about tobacco use.

You will find that as your child grows, your conversations about tobacco will change and reflect their growing maturity, intellectual abilities and the pressures they face. Talking about tobacco will set the stage for important discussions about alcohol, drugs and other risky behaviours.

Don't expect to have just one conversation with your child. Odds are you will probably talk about the subject many times and in many different places. Whenever you have some time together, you can strike up the conversation again. And keep in mind that children mature at different rates. The age ranges used in this guide are approximate. You know your child best and will have a better sense of how to approach them about tobacco use ■

age 6 and under

At this point, your child is at the stage where they are like sponges – absorbing information about the world around them. This is the time when they will begin to form their attitudes and beliefs about tobacco. Although they are not ready to start smoking themselves, be aware that the people your child sees on a daily basis will influence their perception of the world around them and shape their attitudes and beliefs about tobacco.

YOUR CHILD'S POINT OF VIEW

"Mommy, what is that man doing? He has smoke coming out of his mouth like a dragon!"
Some preschool and kindergarten children may not have actually noticed anyone smoking or even been exposed to second-hand smoke. If you are a non-smoker, your child may see people who smoke and wonder what they are doing. This is a great time to begin to point out the negative effects of tobacco such as how bad it smells and how unhealthy it is.

BEING A POSITIVE ROLE MODEL

If you have not already done so, now is the time to make your home smoke-free. Make a firm plan and stick to it. (For more information about making your home smoke-free, see Section 5.)



“Hockey players don’t smoke because it will make it hard for them to breathe when they play.”

IF YOU SMOKE

“Daddy are you going to die because you smoke?”

If you smoke cigarettes, pipes or cigars you will probably have to answer questions from your child about why you smoke. Young children tend to see the world as either “good” or “bad” and most will see smoking as “bad”. Your child may be confused because you smoke and you may find it difficult to tell them that smoking is bad for you because you don’t want to worry them. This is probably a good time to consider quitting. By quitting now, you can have a positive influence on your child’s future decision not to smoke. Studies have shown that children who observe their parents quitting are less likely to smoke themselves.

If you are unable to quit, it is important that you help your child understand that it is very difficult to quit and that you know it is bad for your health. Do everything you can to avoid smoking around your child.

HOW TO TALK TO UNDER 6 YEAR OLD ABOUT TOBACCO

At this age, you need to take advantage of opportunities to let your child know about the harmful effects of tobacco. For example, when your preschooler is washing her hands, you might say: **“There are lots of things we do to keep our bodies healthy and clean, like washing our hands or brushing our teeth. But there are also things that are bad for us. Smoking cigarettes is one of these. It makes your breath smell bad and makes it hard to breathe.”**

If they are interested in a particular subject such as ballet or hockey, bring that subject into the conversation in a meaningful way that shows them how smoking relates to their interest. For example: **“Hockey players don’t smoke because it will make it hard for them to breathe when they play.”**

ALL STAR QUIZ

- 1 Smoking makes it hard to breathe.
(true)
- 2 If I smoke, it won't hurt how I run and play.
(false)
- 3 Cigarettes can stain your teeth and turn your fingers yellow.
(true)
- 4 Smoking can't hurt your heart.
(false)
- 5 Second-hand smoke can move through your whole house into your bedroom. (true)
- 6 If my big sister smokes, it's ok if I try.
(false)
- 7 It's OK to eat in restaurants near people who smoke.
(false)
- 8 Smokers get sick more often than non-smokers.
(true)

Bonus

I will be a non-smoker when I grow up!
(Extra points for "YES!")

HELPFUL TIPS

It's never too early to let your child know exactly how you feel about tobacco. Children usually adopt their families' values, so let them know what matters to you and why.

Make your expectations clear from the start. By setting and consistently enforcing realistic rules, you will reduce the risk your child will smoke and as an added bonus, lower the chances that they will later become involved in other risky behaviours such as alcohol and other drug use ■

true or false

As they grow up, children face a maze of choices. They are influenced by parents, friends, teachers, peers and siblings. It is important to provide your child with the confidence to choose the healthy choices that are right for them – like staying tobacco-free. You can use the following quiz questions to help your child learn what's true and false about smoking:

7–11 year olds

Up until they are about 7, most Canadian children do not experiment with tobacco, but they may be exposed to older youth and family members who smoke or use chewing tobacco. However, by the time they are about 10 or 11, they begin to move into the stage of experimenting with tobacco. In Canada, it is estimated that one in ten youth of this age have tried tobacco in some form and some may even be using it regularly.



YOUR CHILD'S POINT OF VIEW

"My friends say it's cool to smoke."

It will come as no surprise to most parents that one of the biggest influences on children to smoke is their peer group. For many generations, friends have influenced friends to smoke. As they get older, children may choose to smoke in order to gain acceptance by others their own age and to prove they are mature, cool and above all, not influenced by adults.

My brother smokes, I think I'll try it as well."

Siblings are also a powerful influence on whether or not a child smokes. If a child has an older brother or sister who smokes then tobacco may be available and even offered to them. This increases the possibility the younger sibling will start to smoke too.

"I just want to try it. I want to know what it is like to smoke."

It is normal for children to experiment with new things, take new risks and test boundaries. Most youth who begin using tobacco do not plan to continue to do so forever. They are simply experimenting with it to see if they will like it and what they might gain from it. Unfortunately, by the time they decide to quit it's often too late and they are addicted.

BEING A POSITIVE ROLE MODEL

Get the whole family involved. Make sure that all members of the family, especially those who smoke, reinforce the tobacco-free message. Ask any relatives who smoke not to smoke around your child or to provide tobacco to them.

10 different ways your child can say no to tobacco

Use these phrases to help your child practice how to say "no":

- 1 **BE DIRECT:**
"No thanks. Smoking sucks."
- 2 **BE HONEST:**
"I'm trying out for the basketball team and smoking will slow me down."
- 3 **TALK ABOUT REAL LIFE:**
"My grandfather died of cancer and I don't want to end up that way."
- 4 **CHANGE THE SUBJECT:**
"Nah, why don't we go over to the school and toss a ball around."
- 5 **TRY A GOOD COMEBACK LINE:**
"If I wanted to smell awful, I'd hang around with a skunk."
- 6 **MAKE A JOKE:**
"I've made a deal with my lungs; I don't smoke and they keep working."
- 7 **WALK AWAY:**
"Gee is it that time already? I'd better get going!"
- 8 **BLAME IT ON AN ADULT:**
"If my parents catch me, I'm in big trouble."
- 9 **TALK ABOUT TOBACCO ADDICTION:**
"I'm not gonna get sucked in to that trap."
- 10 **AVOID THE SITUATION:**
Do something else before they can even ask you to smoke.

IF YOU SMOKE

It is interesting to note that parents play an indirect role in influencing their child's decision to smoke by affecting their child's choice of friends who smoke. According to a recent study, teens with smoking parents were more likely to have friends who smoke and were therefore more likely to smoke themselves. If you smoke, pay attention to your child's choice of friends and whether they smoke or their parents do.

HOW TO TALK TO YOUR 7-11 YEAR OLD ABOUT TOBACCO

As they get older, children change their view of tobacco. By the time they are 7 years old, children begin to realize that the world is not as black or white as they thought it was when they were younger. Around that time, their view of smoking changes and they often begin to see tobacco in a more positive light. Even a child who was against smoking when she was younger may change and be tempted to smoke. This is a very important time to raise the issue of tobacco and to stress the fact that smoking is not cool.

When you see someone smoking in a movie or on TV, start a discussion about how cigarettes are used in the movie to make an actor look rebellious or cool. Point out that in reality cigarettes actually cause wrinkles and make you smell bad. Or when you see a baseball player using chewing tobacco, point out how the athlete is actually harming their health instead of improving their game.

This is also a good time to talk to your child about peer pressure. Ask him if he knows what peer pressure is and if he has ever felt pushed by his friends to do something he didn't want to do.



By defining and discussing peer pressure, you will help prepare your child to deal with it. Children are much better able to say no to pressure when they have practiced ahead of time.

By defining and discussing peer pressure, you will help prepare him to deal with it. Children are much better able to say no to pressure when they have practiced ahead of time. Now is a good time to work with your child to help him practice how to say no.

Always try to create and maintain a supportive atmosphere. You will need to take advantage of times when you and your child can talk without being disturbed. It doesn't have to be too formal—one of the best times to talk might be when you are in the car, driving to swimming lessons or music practice, or when you are eating together. You could also take a few minutes before bedtime, or bring up the subject during a walk together.

A NOTE ON TRANSITIONS

Transition times are especially important. For example, when children start junior high they may assess their own behaviour and make decisions on how they should act, especially around their peers. They may have already been observing older youth and considering different ways to behave such as using tobacco. As a parent, you will need to be aware of important transitions and increase the number of conversations you have about tobacco at that time ■

HELPFUL TIPS

Find out about your child's point of view. Ask them what they think of smoking and the pressures they feel to smoke.

Don't lecture or nag your child about tobacco. Show them you believe they are capable of making the right decision themselves.

Take advantage of any and all situations where you can talk about tobacco. For example, if you pass by a group of teenagers who are smoking, once you are out of earshot you might ask your child how smoking makes the group of teenagers look. Take the opportunity to correct any misconceptions, if needed.

Give clear specific messages when talking about tobacco and tobacco products so your child will know exactly what is expected.

12–14 year olds

Between the ages of 12 and 14, the number of Canadian youth who experiment with tobacco triples to 34% or one in three. At this point, your child may have moved from experimenting with tobacco to occasional use (i.e. on weekends or at a party). This is also the age when youth start to test their parental authority and it is an extremely risky time for smoking to start. Peer pressure really begins to build at this stage and it is quite likely that your child will have friends who smoke. When your child enters high school he or she will find themselves in a new world and may be ill at ease. They might see smoking as a way to ease the stress and to create an identity in order to fit in.

YOUR CHILD'S POINT OF VIEW

"It's my life. You can't tell me what to do. I'll smoke if I want to."

Sometimes, youth use tobacco because they think it will make them seem more grown up. They are anxious to separate from their parents and teachers and want to appear older than they are. They see advice against smoking as a form of control and will reject it in order to do what they please, just like adults.

"I just want to smoke!"

Certain personality characteristics also affect whether or not your child smokes. Does your child appear to have poor self-esteem? If so he is more likely to smoke. Is your child a risk taker? Studies have also shown that youth who engage in risk taking behaviour have a higher chance of smoking. Does your child daydream at school? Children who tend to be inattentive at school and at home are also more likely to smoke.

BEING A POSITIVE ROLE MODEL

At this age, your child is even more aware of your behaviour, even if she doesn't seem to care. Continue to maintain a tobacco-free policy in your home and car and celebrate your success in keeping it so.

IF YOU SMOKE

If you smoke, when you go out with your child, choose smoke-free restaurants and activities. Talk to other parents about smoking in front of your children. Tell your children about when and why you started to smoke and explain how you thought it would make you feel. Then, tell them how you became addicted and how it is affecting your health now.

HOW TO TALK TO YOUR 12–14 YEAR OLD ABOUT TOBACCO

Listen to what your child has to say about smoking and ask them directly about the pressures they may be facing to smoke. Continue to build a foundation of trust that will grow and develop as they get older. You will need to ensure that your child is not afraid to tell you what is really happening. Accept the fact that it is normal for your child to experiment. Teach them that there are other ways to express their individuality and maturity such as their choice of interests and hobbies, clothes, music and television shows.

Be aware of whether or not your child's friends smoke. If they have at least one close friend who smokes, this increases the chances that your child will smoke as well. If that's the case, don't wait until you know your child has started to smoke. Instead, you might want to try asking something like "Your friend Chris, smokes, right? Does that make you feel tempted to smoke?" Help your child understand that a good friend is someone who shares their values and experiences and respects and listens to their feelings. Try to explain that friends who ask to do things your child is not comfortable with are really not friends at all.

If you discover that your child has been using tobacco, don't panic or overreact! At this point, it is probably not enough to point out the health risks alone, you will need to come up with other negative facts about tobacco. Here are a few:

- Tobacco use hurts young people's physical fitness especially their performance and endurance.
- Smoking is expensive. Money spent on cigarettes could be better spent on new clothes or music CDs.
- Smoking makes your breath and clothes smell.
- Smoking sets a bad example for younger children, including siblings.

ANOTHER IMPORTANT TRANSITION

Moving into high-school is often another important point at which children consider their decision to use tobacco and may decide to take up the habit. During this crucial time, take extra care to observe your child's behaviour and choice of friends and make sure you keep the subject of tobacco uppermost ■

HELPFUL TIPS

No matter what their age, don't assume your child already knows the dangers of tobacco. Continue to provide them with the facts.

Listen to what your child has to say. By listening to your child, you show them respect. Youth who feel confident and respected have a higher self esteem and will find it easier to say no to tobacco.

Encourage and support your child's involvement in sports and other activities. Youth who do well in school and participate in structured, extra-curricular activities are less likely to smoke.

Keep up to date on fashions and music. Watch your child's favourite sports or TV show together. Have some fun and see the positive side of their activities and interests even if you don't agree with all of their choices.

15–19 year olds

The period between 15–19 is a time when many young people progress to regular smoking and by smoking on a more regular basis they increase their chance of becoming addicted. Fortunately, the latest Canadian statistics show that the number of youth aged 15–19 who smoke is decreasing. In 2004, only 20% of Canadian teens aged 15–19 smoked which is down from 28% in 1999. If asked, most teens would tell you that the number of their friends or people in their school who smoke is much higher. It is important to note that this overestimation may actually influence their decision to smoke. As a parent, you can destroy the myth that everybody smokes by providing your teen with the correct information.



YOUR TEEN'S POINT OF VIEW

"Tobacco makes me feel better."

Today's young people are dealing with a lot of stress in their lives. Heavy school workloads, pressures of part time jobs, social and family stressors and even stress caused by boredom can have an impact on a young person's decision to use tobacco.

"Smoking can't hurt me. Besides I can quit whenever I want."

To most teens, the possibility of illness seems very remote and they think that cigarettes won't affect their health. During their early experimentation with cigarettes, youth rarely buy them and will probably smoke only occasionally.

Because they have not been smoking for very long, teens often believe that they can quit whenever they want to. Unfortunately, for many teens, addiction is really not a choice. While teens often believe that they will not still be smoking after graduation, studies have shown that many continue to smoke as young adults.

"Smoking is part of my image."

Another important reason why youth smoke is because they think it makes them look and act cool or tough. They feel that by smoking they can avoid being criticized and will fit better into their peer group.

Many youth rely on the media to develop their image. Although tobacco advertising to youth is restricted in Canada, movies, television shows and American magazines all contain powerful messages about smoking. For years, smoking has been portrayed as cool – glamorous for women and tough for men. Research studies have shown that children are extremely sensitive to how tobacco is portrayed and this may influence them even more than peer pressure. You can greatly reduce the impact by pointing out false ideas of glamour, maturity, coolness and beauty.

BEING A POSITIVE ROLE MODEL

During this age, teens often become more comfortable with their identity and will begin to develop a stronger respect for their parents that will increase as they get even older.

Having faced the pressure to smoke themselves, teens will have an even greater respect for their parent's own decision not to smoke.

IF YOU SMOKE

Now is the time to really be honest with your child about why you smoke and why you don't want them to make the same mistake.

HOW TO TALK TO YOUR 15–19 YEAR OLD ABOUT TOBACCO

At this point, your teenager is well into developing her own identity and may view tobacco use as a way to fit in and to ease the stress of social situations with their peers. Your teenager is probably going out with groups of friends more often and will be exposed to cigarette smoking much more than before. Although she may seem to be moving further away from you as she prepares for adulthood, this is a time when she needs you more than ever.

The teenage years are a good time to talk about the effects of smoking on physical appearance. Cigarettes in the media create the image that smoking is sexy and attractive and teens identify improving self-image as a reason for smoking. In reality, smoking actually causes yellow teeth, bad breath, smelly clothes, impotence and early facial wrinkles.

As your teenager becomes older, his self confidence will increase and he will develop a stronger sense of who he is. Many older teens realize that smoking is not the best way to look cool or be sophisticated. They also become much more aware of how smoking is portrayed in the media and often this reason alone is enough to prevent them from starting or is an incentive to quit if they smoke.



HELPFUL TIPS

- Emphasize what your child does right rather than wrong. By rewarding them for staying tobacco-free you raise their self confidence and help them resist peer pressure.
- Keep the conversation going! At this point you may think you have done your job as a parent and done enough to discourage your child from smoking. Unfortunately, youth continue to start smoking until they are into their early twenties. Don't stop now!
- Talk to your teens about their goals and values in life and how tobacco fits in or interferes with them.
- Remind your teen that they are an important role model for younger children and suggest they become involved in anti-tobacco activities at school or a local tobacco control coalition.
- Point out the excessive cost of smoking. Even at one half of a pack a day, they could spend almost \$7,000 on cigarettes during high school.
- Encourage your teen to get involved in tobacco control. They can either join an existing group in their region or province or start up a new group at their school.
- If your child is smoking, check out Health Canada's has smoking cessation resource for youth called Quit 4 Life. Visit www.quit4life.com for more information ■

For more information on smoking, visit www.gosmokefree.ca

OTHER THINGS YOU CAN DO

MAKE YOUR CHILD'S WORLD SMOKE-FREE

Second-hand smoke contains the same 4,000+ chemicals that are inhaled by a smoker. About 50 of these chemicals are associated with, or are known to cause cancer. The best way to protect your family from second-hand smoke at home is not to allow the smoking of cigarettes, cigars or pipes in your residence or car.

Take a look at the many places your child spends his or her time. Is your home smoke-free? When you go out to eat as a family, do you make a point of choosing to eat in non-smoking restaurants? Do any of your child's friends or their parents smoke? You will need to address all these issues and do everything you can to ensure that your child's exposure to tobacco or second-hand smoke is as minimal as possible.

Once you have made the decision to make your home and car smoke-free, you will need to make a firm plan and stick to it, even when your children aren't around. For more information, call 1-800 O-Canada for a copy of "Make Your Home and Car Smoke-free: A Guide to Protecting your Family from Second-hand Smoke" or visit www.gosmokefree.ca for an electronic copy of the booklet. This booklet will provide you with a step by step approach to making your home and car smoke-free.

Work with your child's school

Almost all elementary and secondary school buildings in Canada are tobacco-free but there are still other things you can do to strengthen the anti-tobacco message at school:

- Ensure that there is no smoking allowed on the school-grounds.
- Ask your child's school not to accept any funding, curricula or other materials from the tobacco industry.
- Ensure that there is no tobacco use at school events.
- Ask your principal if the school has a program to educate students about the harmful effects of tobacco use from kindergarten through grade 12 with intensive education in grades 7 and 8.
- Lobby for tobacco prevention and cessation training for teachers.
- Encourage other parents to get involved in school-based tobacco-prevention programs.

Support other local tobacco efforts

Work with your local public health department to support new municipal or provincial laws to make restaurants and other public areas smoke-free or new initiatives to enforce the existing laws that prohibit cigarette sales to children.

Join with other parents

You might be surprised to learn how many of your fellow parents are dealing with the same issues. Team up with them to reinforce your commitment to keeping your child tobacco-free.

Join a local tobacco control coalition

For more information on how to get involved with the tobacco issue, check the resources section of this guide ■

R E S O U R C E S

For more information about all aspects of smoking and the tobacco issue call 1-800 O-Canada.

Your local public health unit can provide you with more information about tobacco related resources and help available in your community.

You can also contact your local Cancer Society, Heart and Stroke Foundation or Lung Association or for more information.

If you have access to the internet:

Visit Health Canada's website:
www.gosmokefree.ca

Check out the National Clearinghouse on Tobacco and Health:
www.ncth.ca

For useful tips on how to quit smoking, check out Health Canada's website:

www.gosmokefree.ca.

You will find useful resources such as the phone numbers of Quitlines across Canada and information about how to obtain a copy of On the Road to Quitting, a smoking cessation guide for adults.

If you are helping your child quit smoking, visit Health Canada's Quit 4 Life:

www.quit4life.com.

This fun, upbeat and interactive website is geared towards youth.

N O T E S