
SMOKING AND TOBACCO USE

Nicotine is the drug that is found in tobacco products like cigarettes, chewing tobacco, cigars, snuff, etc. Nicotine is as addictive as heroin or cocaine! According to the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, smoking kills more people than alcohol, AIDS, car crashes, illegal drugs, murders, and suicides combined -- and thousands more die from other tobacco-related causes -- such as fires caused by smoking and smokeless tobacco use.

More than 90% of all adult smokers began using tobacco while in their teens. Lifetime smoking and other tobacco use almost always begins by the time kids graduate from high school. Experimentation with cigarettes often develops into regular smoking, which typically turns into a strong addiction -- well before the age of 18 -- that can overpower your very best efforts to quit.

Smoking. The immediate effects of smoking include: bad breath, increased phlegm, irritated eyes and throat, and increased heartbeat and blood pressure, shortness of breath, cold hands and feet, headache, increased illness, tooth decay, gum disease, and pre-cancerous gene mutations. *Eventually, roughly 1/3 of all teen smokers will die prematurely from smoking-caused disease, such as heart attack, stroke, emphysema, and cancer!*



Increases Stress. Contrary to popular belief, smoking does not relieve stress. Studies have shown that on average, smokers have higher levels of stress than non-smokers and experience the feeling of "stress" when craving a cigarette. The feelings of relaxation that smokers experience while they are smoking are actually a return to the normal unstressed state that non-smokers experience all of the time.

Signs of withdrawal. People who are addicted to nicotine experience the following symptoms:

- ⊙ Strong urges to smoke,
- ⊙ Feeling anxious or irritable,
- ⊙ Being unsuccessful in attempts to not smoke.

Smokeless tobacco. Smokeless tobacco use can lead to cancer of the mouth, gum disease, and nicotine addiction. More specifically, spit tobacco causes *leukoplakia*, a disease of the mouth characterized by white patches and oral lesions on the cheeks, gums, and/or tongue. Leukoplakia, which can lead to oral cancer, occurs in more than half of all users in the first three years of use. Studies have found that 60% - 78% of spit tobacco users have oral lesions.

Constant exposure to tobacco juice causes cancer of the esophagus, pharynx, larynx, stomach and pancreas. Spit tobacco users are up to 50 times more likely to get oral cancer than non-users. These cancers can form within five years of regular use.

Chewing tobacco has been linked to tooth decay. A study by the National Institutes of Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found chewing tobacco users were four more times likely than non-users to have decayed dental root surfaces. Spit tobacco also causes gum disease (*gingivitis*), which can lead to bone and tooth loss.

Secondhand smoke. Every day, more than 15 million kids are exposed to secondhand smoke at home. That exposure increases the chances that kids will suffer from smoke-caused coughs and wheezing, bronchitis, asthma, pneumonia, potentially fatal lower respiratory tract infections, eye and ear problems, and other health problems. Each year, 280 kids actually die from respiratory illness caused by secondhand smoke. Ask that others not smoke around you and avoid environments where smoking is allowed.



If you use tobacco and you're ready to quit, there is help:

Nicotine Anonymous(715) 573-4147
12-step support group for quitting tobacco.

For more ideas about how to quit smoking, you can call:

Wisconsin Tobacco Quit Line(800) QUIT-NOW
Or access their website at: www.ctri.wisc.edu/quitline2.html

Gives counseling over the phone to smokers who are trying to quit. Also provides information for family and friends about tobacco use, and self-help materials.

For more information visit:
www.tobaccofreekids.org
www.fightwithfact.com

