

Greenwich Hospital

Smoking and Asthma

PATIENT/FAMILY INFORMATION SHEET

How does smoking affect asthma?

Tobacco smoke is a major trigger for many asthmatics. A trigger is something that irritates an asthmatic person's airway and causes an asthma attack or flare-up. The smoke may be from a cigarette, pipe, cigar, or marijuana.

Second hand smoke, which is the smoke from the burning end of tobacco and the smoke breathed out by a smoker, is as dangerous for asthmatics as the act of smoking. Children who live with second hand smoke are more likely to develop asthma flare-ups and serious lung and sinus infections.

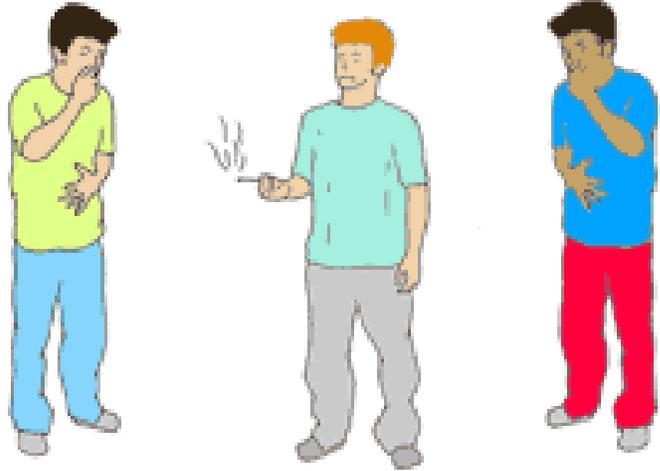


Image Source: www.deafcancerwise.co.uk

It is important for parents to:

- Not smoke when their child has asthma
- Not allow anyone else to smoke in the home or car
- Avoid public places where there may be smoking
- Not allow caregivers to smoke
- Teach your child to never begin smoking.

Why is it important for my teenager with asthma not to smoke?

- According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, every day approximately 4,000 American teens try their first cigarette. If this current trend continues, it is estimated that 6.4 million children can be expected to die prematurely from a smoking-related disease.
- Smoking causes irritating substances to settle in the moist lining of the airways and lungs, which can cause an asthma flare-up.
- People who smoke are in constant states of poor asthma control and have ongoing asthma symptoms.

- Tobacco smoke damages the tiny hairs that line the respiratory system. These hairs, called cilia, are important to keep dust and mucus out of the airways and lungs.
- Tobacco smoke causes more mucus production, clogging already inflamed airways and making it difficult to breathe.
- Tobacco smoking is also a leading cause of other lung diseases, such as cancer and emphysema.

Peer Pressure and Smoking

Teenagers make up the largest growing number of new smokers yearly. The tobacco industry advertising campaigns seem to have special appeal to young people.

As children become teenagers, their friends become very influential in their lives. Speak with your teenager about the dangers of peer pressure, friends who smoke, and how to say “No” to smoking.



Sources: Nemours Foundation @ <http://kidshealth.org> Retrieved 11/05.
The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention/Division of Adolescent and School Health @ www.cdc.gov Retrieved 11/05.
The Cleveland Clinic Health Information Center @ www.clevelandclinic.org Retrieved 11/05.

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