

Greenwich Hospital

Smart Talk for Teens about Smoking and Asthma

PATIENT/FAMILY INFORMATION SHEET

It is easier to never start smoking than to try to stop....

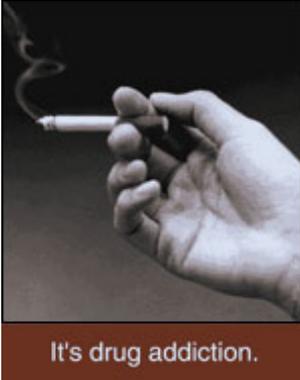


Image Source: smoking.drugabuse.gov

You may remember family photos showing your parents, aunts, or uncles smoking. At that time, smoking was a more frequent habit. Today, we are more familiar with the hazards of smoking and how bad it is for our health.

Even with this information, some people still continue to smoke. Why is this? Once you start smoking it is very hard to quit because the nicotine in tobacco is very addicting. This means that your body becomes so use to the nicotine that you have to continue smoking just to feel normal.

So.....you are better off never starting this addicting habit.

Smoking and asthma are a bad combination....

You probably know that smoking leads to cancer, but do you know the health hazards with smoking when you have asthma? Smoking is very risky because of the damage that it does to your lungs. It increases the number of asthma flare-ups you may have and it makes breathing very hard.

When you have asthma, smoking will make you cough and wheeze more, and feel more short of breath. The smoke is very irritating to your airways and it makes them swollen and more narrow. It also causes your body to make more mucus that becomes very sticky and clogs your airways.

You may also cough more at night, which disturbs your sleep. You may have problems breathing during sports or other activities. You will probably need to use your rescue inhalers more, and all of this leads to asthma flare-ups with more frequent trips to the doctor or hospital emergency room.

Did you Know??

Every day approximately 4,000 teens try their first cigarette and 6.4 million will die earlier than expected because of this.

Other reasons why you don't want to start smoking....

Why do other teens your age start smoking? Some reasons given by other teens to explain why they started smoking include:

 **They thought it helped them to look older....**Yellow teeth, yellow fingers and fingernails, and wrinkles caused by smoking will certainly do that!

 **They thought it helped them to relax....**Smoking actually does the opposite—it makes your heart beat faster and it makes your breathing harder!

 **They thought it was a way to look rebellious, "cool," or to be singled out...**The smoke from puffing away and the smell of cigarettes on your clothes and breath will certainly single you out from others who don't want to be around you or the smell!

 **Some started because their friends started...**If you have asthma and your friends smoke, you should not be hanging around with them. Your *friends* will give you more asthma flare-ups and might just put you in the hospital!

If other people around you smoke...

You may find yourself around family, friends, and other people who do smoke. It is important to let them know how cigarette smoke makes your breathing harder and your asthma worse.

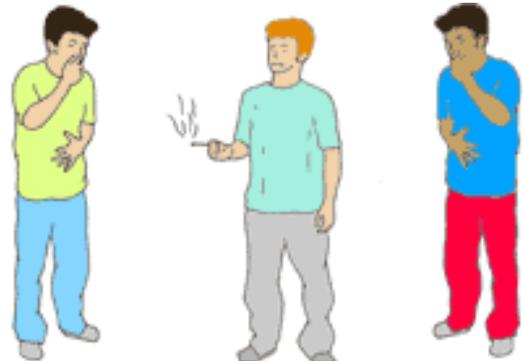


Image Source: www.deafcancerwise.co.uk

Tell others not to smoke in your bedroom, house, or car. It is your air and your health. You want to prevent as many asthma flare-ups as you can and you want to keep your asthma under control. You can't do either of these if you smoke or if you are around second-hand smoke.

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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