



SADD Campaigns and Activities: Youth Tobacco Use

Over the years tobacco companies have created many definitions for smoking: chic, tough, sophisticated, glamorous. The true definition is this: cigarette smoking draws smoke, fire, and toxic substances into your lungs for the purpose of giving the body a dose of nicotine, a highly toxic and addictive drug. Smoking is also dirty and stinky, looks stupid and reduces your life expectancy. Knowing all this, why then do 3,000 more young people ages 13 to 17 take up smoking every day? The cigarette companies are winning. And our young people are the losers.

Eighty percent of adult smokers began smoking when they were teens; 90 percent smoked before they were 21. Ninety-five percent of teens think they'll quit by age 25, but 75 percent of smokers who began in high school are still smoking seven to nine years later.

The dangers of tobacco have been all over the television and in all of the newspapers, yet every day more and more young people pick up a cigarette and start the habit.

Cigarette advertising may be one of the main reasons young people start smoking. Another major factor contributing to the increase in the number of young smokers is the lax enforcement of laws prohibiting the sale of cigarettes to minors.

According to a recent press release from the Center for the Advancement of Health, a state-by-state analysis indicates that state tobacco policies may result in lower teen smoking rates. Researchers from the Saint Louis University School of Public Health found that states with more extensive tobacco-control policies, such as New York, Connecticut, California and Rhode Island, had significantly lower youth smoking rates than did states with fewer such policies, such as South Dakota, Wisconsin and Kentucky.

State legislation that helped reduce teen smoking rates included the enforcement of smoking age restrictions, photo ID requirements for cigarette purchases, and incrementally severe penalties for stores caught selling cigarettes to minors.

The study is published in the October 2000 issue of the American Journal of Preventive Medicine.

Because peers are such a powerful influence over young people, it is critical that SADD chapters attack the issue of tobacco use by their peers and younger students.

WHAT CAN CHAPTERS DO?

- Work with your state legislators to make sure that your state has extensive tobacco-control policies.
- Visit your elementary schools to talk to students about the danger of getting involved in smoking.
- Talk to your town board or city council about banning cigarette vending machines in your area. Kids who are too young to buy cigarettes from a store often turn to vending machines. It is illegal but they usually get away with it.
- Put up posters identifying the ingredients in cigarettes. Emphasize what they are normally used for.



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- Ask your school to provide "Stop Smoking" programs for students and teachers who want to quit.
- Conduct a "Burn your Butts" Day. Ask everyone to turn in their cigarettes. Plan a ceremonial burning in a hibachi. Provide rewards for those who turn in their butts.
- Visit local supermarkets, convenience stores, restaurants, and bowling alleys urging them to be tough on selling cigarettes to minors. You might want to design an appreciation certificate to present to them.
- If you can prevent one person from taking up smoking or get one person to quit, you might save a life.
- Go online to the great resources listed below for additional information, ideas and activities.

RESOURCES

American Cancer Society 1-800-ACS-2345

American Lung Association 1-800-586-4872

Gearing Up to Stop Smoking 1-800-428-6100

Nicotine-Free Teens www.nicotinefreekids.org

Stop Teen Addiction to Tobacco www.stat.org

QuitNet www.quitnet.org

(If you would like free QuitNet fliers to distribute, please call 617-437-1500 or e-mail info@jointogether.org.)

Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids www.tobacco-freekids.org

The American Legacy Foundation www.thetruth.com

Facts about Kids and Smoking

Most smokers start using tobacco before they finish high school. This means that if you stay smoke-free in school, you will probably never smoke.

Most teens who smoke are addicted to nicotine. They want to quit smoking, but they can't. When they try to quit, they experience nasty withdrawal symptoms -- just like adults do.

Tobacco is often the first drug used by kids who use alcohol and illegal drugs such as marijuana.

Kids who start smoking are more likely to get lower grades in school. They tend to hang out with other kids who smoke. They may have low self-image and they don't know how to say no to tobacco.



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Cigarette advertisements are designed to make people think that smoking is cool and that everybody does it. These ads are misleading. Seventy percent of kids don't smoke.

Here's some good news! People working in their communities -- kids who warn each other about the dangers of smoking and programs that make it harder for stores to sell cigarettes to kids -- are helping to keep kids away from tobacco. Do your part!

From the Surgeon General's Report for Kids about Smoking

WHAT'S IN A CIGARETTE?

People really smoke these?

Here's why tobacco products are killers. They are a combination of deadly ingredients. Do you and your friends really want to put carbon monoxide, formaldehyde, acetone and ammonia in your lungs?

- Nicotine: a powerful poison; once used as an insecticide; an addictive drug, just like heroin and cocaine.
- Cyanide: a deadly poison.
- Carbon Monoxide: a poisonous gas found in car exhaust fumes.
- Formaldehyde: the solution used to preserve dead frogs in biology class.
- Methanol: an additive in (or substitute for) gasoline.
- Acetone: a nail polish remover.
- Tar: a sticky, brown substance that clogs up your lungs and stains your teeth and fingernails.

Cigars and chewing tobacco are NOT safe alternatives to cigarettes. Both pose dangerous health risks and are also addictive and deadly.

BODY PARTS

Those perfect looking models in cigarette ads are living a lie! Here's what really happens to your body when you smoke.

Brain:

Uses -- Thinking & Learning & Dreaming Smoking causes migraine headaches and strokes.

Face:

Uses -- Smiling & Frowning & Clowning Smoking speeds up the aging process of skin and is associated with the development of facial wrinkles at a younger age, especially in females.

Mouth:

Uses -- Tasting & Kissing & Singing Smoking gives you bad breath, and smokers have triple the cavities and tooth loss of nonsmokers. Cigarettes and chewing tobacco also stain your teeth and cause oral cancer.



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Lungs:

Uses -- Breathing & Panting & Howling Smoking dumps tar and other toxic chemicals that kill lung tissue and cause bronchitis, emphysema, and cancer directly into the lungs.

IF YOU DON'T SMOKE - DON'T START. IF YOU DO - STOP!

Sibley County Improv Students from the GFW High School visited the 7th graders at the middle school on Kick Butt's Day Wednesday, April 3. The high school students performed several scenes related to tobacco use among teens and adults and then had conversations with the 7th graders about tobacco use prevention. Kick Butt's Day was celebrated nationwide by many schools and the middle school SADD students joined in the effort by sponsoring activities during lunch. Students were asked to sign a "No Tobacco Use" pledge card and were given stickers and pencils in thanks for their support.