

Teens and Tobacco Use

Most teenagers are aware that tobacco use is a leading cause of death. However, this doesn't stop them from trying tobacco products. Trying tobacco just one time puts them at risk for addiction to nicotine. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) supports actions to help prevent teens from using tobacco, including restricting advertising and raising the product prices and purchase age of tobacco products. This fact sheet offers facts and tips for parents to help address teen tobacco use.

Health Concerns and Fast Facts

- Health problems caused by tobacco use include tooth decay, damaged metabolism, frequent coughing, increased phlegm, and breathing problems
- 90% of daily tobacco users begin by age 18
- In 2014, 25% of high school students reported current use of a tobacco product, including 13% who reported current use of two or more tobacco products
- Types of tobacco products used by high school students in 2014: e-cigarettes-13%, hookah- 9%, cigarettes- 9%, cigars (including small cigars or cigarillos like Swisher Sweets or Black and Milds) -8%, smokeless tobacco- 6%, pipes- 2%, snus-2%, bidis- 1%, dissolvable tobacco- 1%
- Factors that can influence tobacco use are:
 - Use of tobacco products by friends or family members
 - Lack of parental support or involvement
 - Accessibility, availability, and price of tobacco products
 - Low levels of academic achievement
 - Low self-esteem
 - Exposure to tobacco advertising (including in movies, TV, or video games)

Tips To Keep Teens From Using Tobacco Products

- Be a role model for your children. Children of current and former smokers face a higher risk of becoming a smoker. If you smoke, try to quit. Seeing how difficult it is for you to quit may be enough to keep your kids from starting.
- Be aware of smoking that children see in movies, TV, and video games. The AAP recommends any movie, TV show, or video game showing tobacco use to be rated for adults only.
- Tell your children about the side effects of smoking. Smoking hurts athletic ability, causes wrinkles, stinky breath, stained teeth, and costs a lot of money.
- If teens do start to smoke, encourage them to quit. By quitting, people can add years to their lives. It isn't easy, but every attempt should be considered a success.
- Think beyond cigarettes- Smokeless tobacco, hookah, e-cigarettes, and cloves are all addictive and can cause health problems. None are safe to use.