

# For Teens: Know the Risks of Smoking



Many teens start smoking because they think it looks sophisticated. But have you ever seen adults who smoke all the time? When they run out of cigarettes, they're mad, frustrated, and may even yell at you. It doesn't seem very adult, does it? You already know smoking causes lung cancer. What else do you risk if you smoke?

## Your health risks

Right away, you may cough, wheeze, and have a sore throat—that's the tar clogging up your lungs. You may also have a headache, feel dizzy, and be nauseated—that's the nicotine in your brain. Over time, you risk lung and throat cancer, lung diseases such as emphysema and bronchitis, and thin bones (osteoporosis). If you ever have a broken bone or need bone surgery, smoking can make it harder for your bones to heal. And that's not all. Smoking can affect just about every part of your body, from your brain to your ears, nose, and throat, to your stomach, your muscles and bones, your immune system, and even your sexual function.

## Your personal risks

You know what it's like, being around kids who smoke. They have bad breath and their clothes and hair smell bad. Some kids say kissing a person who smokes is like licking an ashtray. Smoking can cost you hundreds of dollars a year. You also risk permanently stained, yellow teeth and fingers.

## Why some kids smoke

- "I smoke now because I'm young and healthy, and I could quit anytime."
- "My older brother smokes. Both my parents do, too. They look fine to me."
- "Smoking is sexy. A lot of us girls smoke because it looks good. Just look at the ads."

## What really happens

- "I have to quit before the coach lets me on the team. I've tried to quit twice so far."
- "I just found out my dad has lung cancer from smoking. He's in the hospital now."
- "My boyfriend says he could never be serious about someone who smokes."

## To learn more

- Quit-smoking resources from the [CDC at www.cdc.gov/tobacco/quit\\_smoking/](http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/quit_smoking/) or 800-QUIT-NOW (800-784-8669)
- Tools and tips from [Smoke-free.gov](http://Smoke-free.gov) at <https://smokefree.gov/> or 877-44U-QUIT (877-448-7848)
- Tips and support from the [American Lung Association at www.lung.org/stop-smoking/](http://www.lung.org/stop-smoking/) or 800-LUNGUSA (800-586-4872)

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