

Smoking Related Health Problems in Adolescents

Smoking is the cause of many diseases and kills about four hundred and forty two thousand people every year in the United States. In spite of anti smoking campaigns and billboard warnings, more and more people are joining the bandwagon of smokers every year. Out of the total number of new smokers, ninety percent are children and adolescents, replacing smokers who have quit or died early due to a disease caused by smoking. Smoking is the top cause of preventable and premature deaths, followed by obesity.

Smoking not only increases the risk of lung disease, but also increases the risk of contracting lung cancer, oral cancer, emphysema, stroke and heart disease. Certain statistics by the American Lung Associations show alarming results. Over five thousand adolescents smoke their very first cigarette every day, out of which over two thousand turn into regular smokers. Presently there are nearly five million adolescents smokers. Twenty percent of the twelfth graders smoke cigarettes regularly.

Smoking has many harmful affects on the health of a human being. It damages the cardiovascular system, causes high blood pressure, increases heart rate, increases the risk of ischemic stroke, increases the risk of formation of blood clot formation, and decreases the oxygen amount which reaches the tissues in the body, reduces coronary blood flow & cardiac output, and damages the blood vessels. Smoking not only affects physical health, but mental health too. It causes psychological distress and depression.

Smoking not only affects the person who smokes but also other people who surround him/her. According to the American Heart Association, nearly thirty five thousand passive smokers die of smoke inhaled from a lit pipe, cigar or cigarette. People who do not smoke directly and inhale smoke from a cigarette smoke by his/her neighbor is known as passive smoker, secondary smoker or indirect smoker. Among the passive smokers, women, children and infants are at a higher risk. Infants and children who are exposed to smoke develop asthma, frequent ear infections and may even experience infant death syndrome. The symptoms experienced by secondary smokers are coughing, excess mucus formation in the airways, chest discomfort, chest pain, and lung irritation. They even feel irritation of throat, nose and eyes. If the passive smokers experiences chest pain, it can be an indication of a heart disease. Sometimes the symptoms of secondary smoking can coincide with the symptoms of other medical conditions. Hence, it is recommended to contact the doctor immediately after the surfacing of the symptoms.

In active smokers, smoking, apart from building up high cholesterol in blood,

increases the risk of cardiovascular disease, obesity, high blood pressure, physical inactivity and diabetes. So smoking cessation will not only reduce the risk of coronary heart disease, which is top of the list, but also decreases the risk by fifty percent of heart attacks and deaths caused by it. But quitting smoking undertakes lots of physical and mental efforts. The person should be made mentally relaxed and stress free. In case of adolescents, they can be asked to exercise regularly and sleep adequately. The American Lung Association and The American Academy of Otolaryngology have developed certain tips which can be of great help to the smokers who are thinking of quitting. The smokers must first be made to understand the reason for quitting. Stress only makes even more difficult to quit smoking, so a stress free period should be chosen to quit. Family and friends' encouragement and support are extremely necessary to persuade the smoker to quit. If the support isn't sufficient, smokers can join a smoking cessation program or a support group to attain their goals. A balanced diet is a must, along with lots of rest.

Sometimes taking nicotine replacement products, such as nicotine chewing gum, nicotine inhalers, and nicotine patch, are a great help to smokers who want to quit. By using these products the smokers can satisfy their nicotine craving. The good thing is that these nicotine replacement products can deduct the poisonous gases and tars emitted by the cigarettes. But nursing and pregnant women should consult a doctor before trying nicotine replacement products. For such people non-nicotine alternative is available in the market.

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