



Lesson Six: The Truth About Tobacco

Background

Research shows that thousands of teens start smoking each day, and many of them may not have all the facts. Movies, media and music often make smoking look cool and glamorous, and that often persuades teens to smoke in spite of the health hazards. Ninety percent of current adult smokers started before the age of 19. If education is going to have an impact, now is the time to provide your students with as much information as possible on this very addictive product. In fact, while teens start smoking for a wide variety of reasons (i.e. it's cool, it makes them feel grown up, because their friends smoke), there is another "truth" why these kids continue to smoke – they become addicted to nicotine.

Discussion Questions

1. Who can tell me what is meant by "short-term effects?" (**Answer:** A term used to describe the immediate effects of a certain action.) What are some of the short-term effects of smoking? (List these on an overhead or on chart paper.) What are the long-term effects of smoking? (List these as well).
2. How many of you are bothered or "turned off" by the short-term effects of smoking, such as the smell of smoke, yellow teeth, "smoker's breath?" How about the long-term risks? What are your feelings about these?
3. At what age do you think most people start smoking? Why?
4. What do you think about the no-smoking policies we have at our school? Do they help to decrease or increase the numbers of students that smoke? Why or why not?
5. Why do you think teens and adults have a hard time quitting? Is it a lack of will power? Is it because they are not smart enough? Is it because they don't want to stop?
6. Each of you will make the decision to smoke or not to smoke. It should be an informed decision based on facts. What would be the most important reason for you **not** to start smoking? Why?



Vocabulary Builders

Term	Definition
Addiction:	A habit that is very difficult to stop. Typically, a habit is addictive when it replaces a negative feeling (e.g., feeling unwanted or sad) with a positive feeling (e.g., “getting high” or feeling in control). Addictions can also be physical, causing your body to crave or require a specific ingredient or drug.
Nicotine:	The addictive ingredient in cigarettes and other tobacco products. It affects the body in a variety of ways: stimulates the adrenal glands, which produces a “rush” of adrenaline; increases blood pressure, respiration and heart rate. With the intake of nicotine, the brain also releases dopamine that causes a feeling of pleasure or of calm.
Withdrawal:	This term describes what occurs when a person tries to stop an addictive behavior. In the case of tobacco, there are usually feelings of irritability, grumpiness, inability to concentrate, increased appetite, inability to get a good night’s sleep, and constant cravings or desire to smoke. However, the withdrawal symptoms typically peak in 48 hours and are greatly reduced within two weeks.
Dependency:	When a person feels he or she needs something to function or “feel right.” In the case of cigarettes, the person is dependent on the nicotine to function or cope with life.



Activity

Up in Smoke: Seven Deadly Facts

Procedure

Begin a class discussion by reviewing the 7 Deadly Tobacco Facts handout.

7 Deadly Tobacco Facts

1. **443,000:** The number of Americans who will die from tobacco-related deaths. An estimated 49,000 of these are the result of secondhand smoke exposure. Smoking increases your risk for heart attack, stroke and cancer.
2. **6 million:** The number of missed birthdays lost to smoking by premature death in the United States. Your life expectancy will be cut short by about 13.2 years if you are a male smoker and 14.5 years if you are a female smoker.
3. **5 million:** The number of smokers worldwide that will die this year. Current trends show that tobacco use will cause more than 8 million deaths annually by 2030.
4. **90%:** The percentage of current adult smokers who started before the age of 19.
5. **90%:** The percentage of teen smokers who say they will stop smoking after high school.
6. **66%:** The number of teen smokers who are still smoking 5 years later.
7. **\$.10:** The approximate cost for the tobacco industry to make a pack of cigarettes. In early 2010, the average retail price of a pack of cigarettes in the United States was approximately \$4.80 (including federal, state, and municipal excise taxes), but prices vary widely across states.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

After reviewing the fact sheet, ask students the following questions:



- Why do parents and educators spend so much time trying to keep teens from smoking? What facts would support your reasons?
- What facts support the reasons why we currently have a ban on television tobacco advertising? Why?
- Of the seven deadly facts, which one impressed you the most? Why?
- Why do you think most teens say they will stop smoking, but don't?
- How many of you know what a pack of cigarettes costs in our state? How much money is profit for either the tobacco company, the government or the store selling the cigarettes?



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