

# **Smoking: The Toxic Truth**

**#2706-EN-VID**



9710 DeSoto Avenue • Chatsworth • California 91311 • Tel: 800-367-2467 • Tel: 818-773-4300 • Fax: 818-341-6700  
[www.aimsmultimedia.com](http://www.aimsmultimedia.com) • [www.digitalcurriculum.com](http://www.digitalcurriculum.com)

# Introduction

We have learned that the majority of young people who use tobacco are more concerned with vanity than health issues. Therefore it is important to present prevention material with that in mind. Most smokers and dippers don't plan to become lifelong tobacco users. Thus, they have to be shown the short term consequences of their habit. Since they don't understand the power of nicotine addiction when they begin smoking or using spit tobacco, the message that nicotine is a drug must be emphasized. As all teachers know, repetition works.

## Program Summary

The video opens with quick shots of teens talking about smoking, revealing how they became addicted. One teen believes she can avoid addiction by only smoking a few cigarettes a week, reasoning that if she does get hooked she can stop whenever she wants. Another believes he can easily quit. One teen compares the addiction to a form of slavery – his body reminds him every ten minutes or so that the craving for nicotine must be satisfied.

A number of the video's participants are personally connected to someone who died of lung cancer caused by smoking. Some of them continue to smoke; others see this as a reason to avoid cigarettes.

The viewer meets Terry Jones, a patient at Tulane University Hospital who is battling cancer of the larynx. He now has a tube in his throat for breathing, has lost his sense of smell and is learning to speak again. Dr. Nemechek states emphatically that every case of larynx cancer he knows of is a result of smoking. Mr. Jones was shocked to learn that he had developed cancer after quitting and not smoking for a long while. Dr. Nemechek explains that some of the changes to the mucous membranes caused by past smoking do not repair themselves and lay dormant, possibly developing into cancer.

It is unknown how long a person can smoke without damage as it varies by individual. Smoking is playing "Russian roulette" with your life.

Although Terry Jones can no longer speak because of his condition, he manages to wheeze a message to potential smokers : "If people would only understand it is serious ... but they don't." Terry and his wife relate the daily difficulties of living with an open wound in his neck. His son, Terrance, argues that at the time his father began smoking not much was known about its negative effects. But with all the information and evidence against smoking now known, he cannot understand why anyone would smoke.

Students discuss the toxic ingredients inside cigarettes. Dr. Nemechek points out that the chemicals are harmful —as well as is the heat produced in the mouth by cigarette smoking. Students look at a diseased lung with disbelief and disgust. Others examine a jar filled with tar, the residual substance deposited in a smoker's lungs.

Athletic teens disclose how smoking adversely affects their performance and endurance.

An "occasional smoker" talks about how smoking "relaxes her". A non-smoking teen explains that any such "relaxation" felt from smoking is actually the body responding to the nicotine fix. A wise teen observes that although some people smoke to reduce stress when they have problems, the problems remain until they are worked out.

The question is then asked "Is smoking attractive?" Smoking smells – bad breath, stinky clothes and body. Our "occasional smoker" does not believe that smoking will prematurely age her skin. Dr. Erin Boh, a dermatologist, explains that over time smoking causes wrinkling and thickening of the skin. Sophie, the "occasional smoker," agrees to let Susan, a make-up artist, "age" her skin according to the future effects smoking will have on it. Sophie is disturbed by the results and vows to quit.

In concluding, students share how much better they feel by not smoking. They implore young smokers to quit. There is nothing positive about smoking. They tell teens who do not smoke not to start.

Dr. Nemechek sums up the lesson of the video: "Smoking stinks, it is expensive, it gives you cancer ... other than that it's really a great habit!"

## **Ways to Say No to Smoking**

### **Easy outs**

No thank you.  
Nah, not today.  
Maybe another time.

### **Use an "I" statement**

I'm not into smoking.  
I can't imagine why I would.  
I like having lungs that work.

### **Make a good excuse**

I have asthma.  
I'm too broke now.  
My mom will kill me if she smells it.

### **Change the subject**

Let's listen to my new CD.  
Hey, nice haircut.  
Oh no, I'm late, got to go!

### **Be funny**

You are kidding, aren't you?  
And give my girlfriend/boyfriend  
a reason to dump me?  
Hey, did you hear the one about?

# Discussion

If you don't smoke, what are your reasons for not smoking?

Do you know kids who smoke?

Why do you think they smoke?

How has it affected them? Do you think it might affect their future?

Have you been offered tobacco? If so, what did you feel?

What did you say? What did you do? What would you feel, say, and do if you were offered tobacco now?

What would you do if a friend tried to pressure you into smoking? What if someone said, "Hey, don't be so scared – it's cool."

If you have smoked, why did you first want to try it?

Did you like smoking? Why or why not?

How do feel now about having tried smoking?

What are your worries or concerns about having smoked?

Who was with you when you smoked? What if the opportunity comes up again?

What are your thoughts and attitudes about future use?

What people or events or situations might get you to smoke? How will you avoid them?

# Statistics

Each day 3,000 teens start smoking – more than one million a year. One third of them will die from their addiction.

Almost 75% of daily high school smokers still smoke seven to nine years later, even though only 5% thought they would still be smoking five years later.

66% of adolescent smokers age 16-19 say they want to quit smoking and 70% say they would have not started smoking if they could choose again.

More than 50% of adolescents age 12-13 think there are benefits to smoking.

42% of young people who smoke as few as three cigarettes go on to become regular smokers.

*Statistics taken from federal government research, Gallup polls, California Dept. of Health, TAP-II program.*

# Facts

Cigarettes are reported by former drug addicts to be more addictive than cocaine or heroin.

When you smoke you inhale 4000 chemicals, including 43 known carcinogens.

Cigarettes kill trees! One in eight trees is used to make cigarettes and cigarette packages.

Most people, including smokers, hate the smell that smoke leaves on you and your clothes.

*Smoker's Face* is a condition that shows up as early as age 30 for women who smoke. It is described as deeply wrinkled, gaunt-looking, shriveled skin, gray with purplish blotches.

Smoking triples the risk of heart disease death. Women who smoke and use oral contraceptives increase their risk of heart disease even more.

One out of ten infant deaths is due to exposure to cigarette smoke..

Women who smoke are three times as likely to be infertile.

Tobacco use increases the chance of abnormalities in the male's sperm and can cause male impotence.

3,500 Americans **quit** smoking each day. 1,500 Americans **die** from smoking each day.

# Dollars & "Sense"

The typical smoker spends **\$1,277** a year on cigarettes.

Here's what you could do with that kind of spending money:

Play 3,200 video-arcade games

Take 50 of your friends to the movies and buy 24 pizzas afterwards

Buy 183 comic books

Buy 1,700 seedlings to plant three acres of oak, hickory, walnut, or ash trees (to help make up for all the trees that give their lives by becoming cigarette paper, packaging and litter)

If, instead of smoking, you put that \$1,277 a year into a bank account that pays 5% interest, you would have a grand total of \$42,225 after 20 years. And you'll be healthy enough to spend it doing a lot of fun things too!

## Myths & Truth

**Myth:** Most kids my age smoke...don't they?

**Truth:** No. According to the Surgeon General, only 13% teenagers have smoked in the last 30 days (that's 13 out of 100 or 4 out of a class of 30). And only 8% (you do the math!) are "frequent" smokers. That means most kids are smart enough not to smoke (87% to be exact).

**Myth:** No need to worry...smoking won't affect our health until we're a lot older...right?

**Truth:** Symptoms such as shortness of breath, coughing, nausea, dizziness and "phlegm production" start up as soon as you light up for the first time. Yes, even that first cigarette will get you started with health problems. What a drag for a young person!

**Myth:** But if you only smoke a little bit, that can't hurt...can it?

**Truth:** Symptoms like wheezing and coughing have been found in kids who smoke just one cigarette a week.

**Myth:** At least smoking's better than getting into real drugs.

**Truth:** Many times tobacco is the first drug (remember, nicotine is a drug!) used by kids who use alcohol and illegal drugs. According to the Surgeon General's Report, kids who smoke are three times more likely

to use alcohol, eight times more likely to smoke marijuana, and 22 times more likely to use cocaine!

**Myth:** Kids who smoke think they are cool.

**Truth:** So do lots of kids who don't smoke. It has been found that students with the highest grades are less likely to smoke than those with the lowest grades. Daily tobacco use is highest among high school drop-outs and lowest among college students. Kids who smoke think it will give them a better image, make them more popular. Instead, it usually backfires and either makes them look bad or like someone who doesn't care about their own body.

**Myth:** If smoking is so bad, all you have to do is quit. How hard can that be?

**Truth:** Most teens who smoke are sorry they ever started. In fact, 40% said they tried to quit and couldn't. They found out the hard way how addictive nicotine can be and how quickly one can become hooked.

*(Office on Smoking and Health, Centers for Disease Control)*

## **The ABC's of Chemicals in Tobacco**

Remember, there are 4000 chemicals in cigarettes! Here are just a few to think about.

**A**cetone—nail polish remover

**A**mmonia—floor/toilet cleaner

**B**utane—cigarette lighter fluid

**B**utyl Acetate—plastic fibers

**B**enzoic Acid—preservative

**C**admium—rechargeable batteries

**C**arbon Monoxide—lethal car exhaust fumes

**C**itronella Oil—insect repellent

# Activities

1. Take an old sweater or any item of clothing permeable to odors. Place it in a plastic bag. Ask a smoker to exhale the smoke from an entire cigarette into the bag. When done include the cigarette butt (completely cooled but not doused with water). Keep the plastic bag sealed until you are ready to pass it around to your students.

## Discussion

If you were wearing this sweater what impression would others have of you? If you were a smoker how do you think your breath would smell? If cigarette smoke can get into your clothes this way, what do you suppose is happening to your body when you are with smokers, or if you smoke?

2. Encourage your students to become tobacco-free activists. Have them think of ten things they can do to make their community tobacco free. Here are three to get them started:

1. Write a letter to your favorite restaurant, asking them to go completely smoke-free. Let them know that you want to eat in a place with clean air, not just half clean air.
2. Paint posters to encourage younger kids not to smoke. If you have younger brothers and sisters, ask to place them in their schools.
3. Get members of your families and other people in the community to sign a pledge saying they'll remain tobacco-free, or—if they already smoke— to promise to give quitting a try. Of course, you'll sign the pledge first.

Can you come up with seven more actions you can take to make tobacco history in your community?