

## SMOKING: DON'T START, STOP NOW!

Everyone knows that smoking is not good for you. Yet millions of Americans use tobacco products. Most people who smoke begin their habit as teenagers. This leads tobacco companies to bombard adolescents with advertising. The lure of smoking can be very strong, and ads make people think that smoking makes them attractive, sexy and fun loving.

What the smoker really gets is an addiction to a drug (nicotine). Like any addiction, it is hard to break and has numerous negative effects on health and well-being.

People who live or associate with smokers are also affected by smoke. (See handout on passive smoking.) They get sick more often, stay sick longer, and get more cancer, asthma, and other serious illnesses.

Smoking makes your body less attractive to others as well, by giving you bad breath and stained teeth. Your athletic performance suffers, and you spend a lot of money to have all these things happen to you!

The many negative effects on the smoker include:

- Heart disease
- High blood pressure
- Poor lung function
- Cancer of the lung and other organs
- Death

The best way to handle all this? **Don't start smoking!** It can be very tough to resist the messages of advertisements and even tougher to resist peer pressure, but you can. Think about your body and your future. Make the right choice.

If you already smoke, then stop. Get help – it's not easy, in fact it can be quite difficult, but you can do it. We will help. If you stop, you will feel better, look better, and live longer. For help quitting, see our handout "Quit Tobacco Now," go online to [teen.smokefree.gov](http://teen.smokefree.gov) or call 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669).

### **A note about other forms of tobacco**

**Chewing tobacco and snuff** both cause addiction because the nicotine still gets into the bloodstream. They cause mouth cancer, throat cancer, and decreased taste and smell. They cause bad breath and stained teeth. Even though sports heroes may promote smokeless tobacco, it is not safe and is a bad choice. **Hookah** smoking exposes you to significantly more smoke, carbon monoxide and carcinogens than cigarettes. It is not a safer way to smoke. An **E-cigarette** can have as much nicotine as a whole pack of regular cigarettes and can contain cancer causing chemicals.