

# *Tobacco*

## **Overview**

Smoking and smokeless tobacco use is prevalent in American society. Most addicted smokers tried their first cigarette when they were 12 years old, and currently there are 48 million adult smokers. Tobacco users are more likely to die from complications of tobacco use including heart disease, emphysema, chronic lung disease, and many different types of cancers.

## **Objective**

To develop an awareness of the health risks of tobacco use by educating youth.

## **Introduction**

1. Introduce yourself to the students; let them know your name, background, and anything else that may interest them and ties into the presentation.
2. Make the students aware that the information you will present to them is important and that they need to pay attention.
3. Inform the students that they will participate in an activity as time allows and they must be responsible during this activity. Stressing responsibility is especially important if you deal with a younger group of students.

## **Activity**

### **Materials Needed**

- . Demonstration display poster

On the display poster have the students take the “Too Smart to Start” quiz. Introduce the quiz and ask each question to the whole group. After asking and answering the first question, move the marker over and reveal the next question. Discuss the story “A True Story about Spit Tobacco”, Tobacco Facts, and Teenage Tobacco Use lists.

### **To Smart to Start Quiz**

1. **Tobacco won't hurt me. False** - 3000 teens start smoking each day; of those, 1000 will die from tobacco-related diseases.
2. **Smoking relaxes people. False** - Smoking increases heart rate and blood pressure. Tobacco may give smokers the nicotine level their bodies have become used to, but it is just temporary relief from the tension caused by the nicotine addiction.
3. **I exercise, so it doesn't matter if I smoke. False** – A cigarette’s poisonous materials are inhaled directly into a smoker’s lungs, making it difficult for their bodies to perform at their best. Breathing in poisons does not help the body
4. **Tobacco is cool. False** - The majority of teens does not smoke and do not want to date anyone who smokes or uses spit tobacco.
5. **I can quit whenever I want. False** - Over 70% of all smokers say that they would like to stop

smoking, but only 2.3% of smokers succeed in quitting each year.

**6. Chewing tobacco is safer than smoking. False** - Spit tobacco is not a safe alternative to cigarettes. It's addictive and causes mouth, gum and tooth problems.

**7. Tobacco is not a drug. False** - Nicotine, the stimulant in tobacco, is more addictive than cocaine or heroin.

**8. Smoking keeps weight down. False** - Some people do gain weight when they stop smoking. Others do not. Some even lose excess weight when they start to take better care of themselves and are able to exercise more easily. You would have to gain 80 to 90 pounds to do as much damage to your health as smoking one pack of cigarettes a day.

**9. Smoking only hurts the smoker. False** - Secondhand or passive smoke which is involuntarily inhaled by nonsmokers from other people's cigarettes causes 3,000 lung cancer deaths per year in American non-smokers. It is also associated with bronchitis, pneumonia, and asthma in children who live with a smoker.

**10. I smoke because I choose to. False** -The tobacco industry spends more than \$6 billion each year – that's \$16 million each day or \$11,000 a minute - on advertising and special promotions.

## A True Story about Spit Tobacco

Sean Marsee had won 28 medals at track meets. He was a very popular and respected athlete at his high school. Thinking it was safe, Sean began chewing dip tobacco in his mid-teens.

He became addicted. His mother Betty was a registered nurse, and she begged him to quit. Sean tried, but he was unable to. His mother asked him to stop repeatedly, but then it was Sean who had rescued his younger sister when she fell through the ice on the lake. He was the hero of the family — and he was becoming a man now. After a while, Betty gave up trying.

One day Sean came home and told his mother, "Mom, my tongue hurts." He showed her a red sore the size of a half dollar on his tongue with a hard white core in the middle.

"We'd better get you to the doctor," she replied. At the hospital the doctor performed some tests.

A few days later, Sean was lounging around the house watching TV like he always did. The phone rang, and he heard his mother answer in her bedroom. A few minutes later, he heard his mother's muffled sobs through her closed door. He went into her room and softly put his hand on her shoulder. "What's wrong, Mom?"

"Son, you have cancer in your tongue," she sobbed. They went back to the hospital, where Sean was shocked to learn he had to have most of his tongue cut out. He would never be able to talk again. He was 18 years old.

"Can I still run in the track meet on Friday?" he asked the doctor. The doctor said okay. After, Sean went in for the operation to remove much of his tongue.

But the cancer did not go away. Instead, it spread to his jaw and neck muscles. Two more

operations would follow. Sean had to have much of his jaw removed, along with part of his nose, and many neck muscles on one side.

At age 19, Sean lay in bed, sad and in pain. His best friend, who had been told Sean didn't have much longer to live, came down from Chicago to see him for the last time. On first seeing Sean, his friend fought back tears, thinking of the great times he'd never get to have with Sean.

The next day, as they visited, he asked, "Sean, what if we took a photo of you like this?" But Sean shook his head, glaring, and wrote down emphatically, "No, not like *this!*" He was overcome with shame and embarrassment at the idea.

But his friend persisted, "What if many teens could see the photo, and learn the truth about what chewing tobacco really does?" Sean reflected on this for a while. Finally he allowed this picture to be taken, with his track medals pinned to his chest. It's his gift to you.

His friend got another idea. "Sean, what if, by some miracle, you could get a message to other teens? Do you have any words you'd like them to hear?" And Sean nodded — because without his tongue he could not talk — and he gestured for pen and paper. His hands trembled and his eyes welled as he began to write, perhaps in part from the pain he was in. He struggled to write these words, as his message to you: "Do not dip snuff."

And not too long after that, Sean died — sad, disfigured, and in unspeakable pain.

## **Tobacco Facts**

- Every eight seconds someone dies from a tobacco related illness/disease.
- Smoking is the number one preventable cause of premature death in the U.S.
- On average, smokers die nearly seven years earlier than nonsmokers. Smoking is responsible for one out of five American deaths.
- In the U.S., smoking kills more people than cocaine, heroine, alcohol, fire and automobile accidents, homicides, suicides, and AIDS combined.
- Reports from the Surgeon General conclude that smoking cigarettes causes heart disease, lung and esophageal cancer, and chronic lung disease. Cigarette smoking contributes to cancer of the bladder, pancreas, and kidney. Using smokeless tobacco can result in cancer of the gum, mouth, pharynx, larynx, and esophagus.
- Men who smoke increase their risk of death from lung cancer by more than 22 times and from bronchitis and emphysema by nearly 10 times. Women who smoke increase their risk of dying from lung cancer by nearly 12 times and the risk of dying from bronchitis and emphysema by more than 10 times. Smoking triples the risk of dying from heart disease among middle-aged men and women.
- About 10 million people in the United States have died from causes attributed to smoking, including heart disease, emphysema, and other respiratory disease, since the first Surgeon General's report on smoking and health in 1964. Two million of these deaths were the result of lung cancer alone.

- 90% of adult smokers are addicted to tobacco before they reach age 18 and 50% before age 14. The current average age of initiation to tobacco is age 11.
- 48 million adults smoke in the U.S. (22.9% of the population, overall); 33% of youth currently smoke.
- According to a CDC survey, 44% of youths in grades 9-12 smoke in South Dakota, and 17.7% of youths use smokeless tobacco. 14,626 South Dakota youths are projected to die prematurely from smoking.

### **Teenage Tobacco Use**

- In the next 24 hours, 1,180 Americans will die from tobacco use. In all, 430,700 smokers will die from tobacco related disease each year. They are replaced in part by the 3,000 children who start smoking regularly everyday.
- Each day, 3,000 teens smoke their first cigarette, more than one million annually. Approximately one-third of these child smokers will eventually die of smoking-related illnesses.
- At least 4 million adolescents are current smokers.
- Smoking is a pediatric disease. The average teenage smoker starts smoking at age 12.5 and becomes a daily smoker by age 18.
- According to a 1999 national survey of high school students, the overall prevalence of current cigarette use and frequent cigarette use were 14.8% and 12.7%, respectively.
- A 1999 survey reported current cigar use among high school students at 17.7%.
- In 1996, an estimated six million 14-19 year olds (26.7 percent of people in this age group) reported having smoked a cigar in the previous year. Of these, cigarette smokers and smokeless tobacco users were more than three times as likely as non-tobacco users to report having smoked a cigar in the previous year.
- People who begin smoking at an early age are more likely to develop severe levels of nicotine addiction than those who start at a later age.
- Cigarette advertisements tend to emphasize youthful vigor, sexual attraction, and independence themes to purposely appeal to teenagers and young adults struggling with these issues.
- Of adolescents who have smoked at least 100 cigarettes in their lifetime, most of them report that they would like to quit, but are not able to do so.
- Peers, siblings, and friends are powerful influences. The most common situation for first trying a cigarette is with a friend who already smokes.
- A recent survey indicated that among students under 18 who currently smoked, 69.6

percent reported never being asked for proof of age when buying cigarettes.

- Tobacco use primarily begins in early adolescence, typically by age 16. Almost all first use occurs before the time of high school graduation. Recent data shows an alarming increase in smoking by high school and junior high school students. Currently, over 40 percent of high school students use tobacco products. In the last six years, tobacco use among teens has risen 27 percent. The most dramatic increases have been within minorities. Between 1991 and 1999, cigarette smoking among African American students has increased by 56 percent and by 29 percent among Latino students.
- A 1999 survey identified that 7.8 percent of all high school students used smokeless tobacco. Although smokeless tobacco use previously was uncommon among adolescents, older teens began using it between 1970 and 1985 at the same time that the smokeless tobacco industry was strengthening marketing efforts.

## **Wrap Up**

After the activity, talk to students and discuss the tobacco facts they just heard. Go over the “Too Smart to Start” quiz again; discuss with the students how to avoid tobacco.