



## *Teens Be a Leader- Stop Smoking!*

**Have you ever heard this “Smoke, everyone else is.” “What, are you scared?” “I guess you aren’t cool.” “Come on, it’s fun.”**

Peer pressure is difficult and you want to fit in with friends. Before you start smoking or if you are thinking of quitting smoking...read on!

### *1. A few cigarettes won’t hurt me.*

With each puff, you inhale thousands of poisonous chemicals. Your heart beats faster and your blood pressure goes up. Your throat, nose and eyes burn especially when you first start smoking. You may cough and become short of breath. The nicotine in cigarettes can cause you to feel sick to your stomach and dizzy. Carbon monoxide replaces the oxygen in your blood, which decreases your ability to play sports. You won’t cough or feel sick every time you smoke. Your body will get used to it. But the damage to your body increases each time you smoke. Is it really worth it?

### *2. I’ll stop when I want to.*

It’s easy to start but hard to quit. **Seven out of 10** teen smokers say they wish they had never started. Most teen smokers have seriously tried at least once to stop smoking and failed. The younger you are when you start, the harder it will be to stop when you are older. The younger you start, the greater your risk of disease. It only takes a short time to become addicted to nicotine. You will know you are addicted when you start craving cigarettes and feeling nervous without them. You will really know you are addicted when you try to stop and you can’t. Are you addicted?

### *3. Smoking looks cool.*

Smoking makes your teeth yellow and gives you bad breath. Smoking makes your clothes and hair stink. Smoking makes your skin wrinkle sooner. You are becoming unhealthier with each puff you take and reducing your life expectancy. Is this really cool?

### *4. Smoking makes me sexy.*

According to an American Cancer Society survey, **78 percent** of boys ages 12 to 17 said they do not want to date someone who smokes and **69 percent** of girls prefer to date a nonsmoker. In fact, a lot of people do not want to be around smokers. Most teens do not think smoking, dipping or chewing tobacco is sexy and they think it is disgusting. Look at those percentages again!

**5. *Smoking really relaxes me.***

It may feel like it, but nicotine actually does the opposite for your body. It speeds up how your body reacts inside and increases your heart rate. Does that sound like relaxing?

**6. *Smoking keeps me thin. I'll gain weight if I stop.***

Smoking does not keep you slim. Smoking keeps your hands busy so you do not eat. The small amount of weight you may gain when you stop smoking is much less harmful than smoking. A simple exercise plan can help with any weight gain.

**7. *All my friends smoke.***

If all your friends jumped off a bridge, would you? If you follow your friends on this one, you will have bad skin, yellow teeth and bad breath. You will also put yourself at risk for disease and poor health and be in the uncool group in most teen's eyes. What's your choice?

**8. *Do you want to be a leader or a follower?***

Many teens are smoking without thinking of the health risks that come with smoking. Peer pressure is hard to ignore. The smokers *think* they are the cool people and they are the leaders who others want to be like. Maybe that is true. Maybe others see those smokers as being cool but are they really after what you read about what smoking does to people's bodies and how smoking causes serious illness? Start today, you be the leader and the new trendsetter not the follower of what every one else does. Talk to your friends about how cool it is NOT to smoke and how much better you feel when you do not. Show your friends that "cool" is not smoking!

**Be a LEADER... call the Tennessee Tobacco QuitLine at 1-800-QUIT-NOW  
(1- 800-784-8669)... IT'S FREE!!**