



It may start as a cigarette at a party or while hanging out with some smokers. Soon the smoking or dipping becomes commonplace. Before you know it, you're hooked. Would you believe that the nicotine in cigarettes, cigars, dip and bidis is as addictive as cocaine and heroin? Well, it is. And the vast majority of deaths related to smoking are from people who became addicted to nicotine as teenagers.

Once addicted, now what? Lots of teens believe smoking doesn't affect their health. It's estimated that every cigarette cuts about 7 minutes from your life. In fact, doctors find the early signs of blood vessel damage (the kind that leads to stroke and heart attack) in teens who smoke.

You don't have to wait long for the damaging effects of smoking to kick in. Right away, your brain is starved of oxygen. In just a few weeks, your teeth start to yellow and your breath reeks. At some point, men may even become impotent and women infertile.

If you're under 18, there's a legal consequence to face as well. In Texas, it is illegal for minors to purchase, possess or use any kind of tobacco products (no matter where you got it). After you are cited, you'll be sent to a tobacco awareness class. You might also:

- Be sent to community service
- Be fined \$250
- Lose your driver's license
- Let tobacco companies profit off your addiction

## Don't Let Tobacco Companies Sell You Short

Learn more about the industry that profits from addiction, buys influence and sells death. Tobacco is the most heavily advertised and promoted product in Texas. In fact, tobacco companies spend about \$724.6 million in the Lone Star State on advertising ploys that attempt to link smoking to glamour, virility and power. You know the truth.

## Quitting Isn't Easy, But You Can Do It

All it takes is a plan of action and a little help from people who care.

Doctors can help you build an effective quitting plan. They have tips to help make your quit attempt easier and more effective. They can also counsel you on the different aids that are available, like the patch, gum and nasal inhalers, as well as prescription drugs or other therapies.

Family and friends can support your efforts to quit. They can help you stick to your plan, provide moral support or even quit with you. Let them know it's important to you, and they will help you succeed.

The American Cancer Society provides a toll-free Quitline at 1-877-YES-QUIT. If you're over age 13, you can get free and confidential telephone counseling to help you with your quit attempt.

Some people worry that if they quit smoking, they'll gain weight. It depends on what you do after you quit. If you use food, especially food high in calories, as your way to cope with the cravings, then your chances of

**Cravings are tough to deal with. Check with your doctor and those who have successfully quit to see what they can recommend. In the meantime, here are some tips:**

- Feel like you can't walk away from the cigarettes? Put on your shoes and try it—go for a walk when the cravings come.
- Pick up your toothbrush before you pick up a cigarette—you're much less likely to want one after you brush your teeth.
- Counting the minutes until the next time you can sneak a smoke? Try counting to 200 instead. By the time you're done, the cravings will have passed.
- Enlist all of your friends and family to help you get through it—you don't have to go through it alone.
- Even if you stumble a few times, stick with it. You can do it.

*"Smoking helps me focus on my game."*

**Fact:** Smoking deprives your brain of oxygen and makes you short of breath.

*"Smoking helps keep me skinny."*

**Fact:** Gaining weight isn't a given when you quit smoking. If you use food, especially food high in calories, as your way to cope with smoking urges, then your chances of gaining weight are much higher. As you weigh yourself, also weigh your consequences: One-third of all smokers eventually die from their addiction.

*"I can quit anytime I want."*

**Fact:** About three out of every four teens have made at least one serious attempt to quit smoking and have failed.

*"Smoking is really just a social thing for me. I could never get addicted."*

**Fact:** Young people vastly underestimate the addictiveness of nicotine. Of daily teen smokers who think that they will not smoke in five years, nearly 75 percent are still smoking five years later.

*"I'm really healthy. My body can handle a little smoke now and then."*

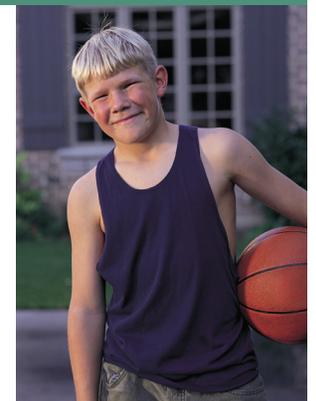
**Fact:** Signs of blood vessel damage—the kind that lead to stroke and heart attack—have been found in teens who smoke.

*"Smoking makes me feel sexy."*

**Fact:** Smoking is known to cause impotence in men and infertility in women.

gaining weight are much higher. Your doctor and the American Cancer Society can provide great tips for keeping those extra pounds off.

For free assistance with quitting, call toll-free: 1-877-YES-QUIT.



## Quitting smoking is the simplest way to:

- Have more friends and money
- Get more dates
- Look better
- Make the team (and the goal!)
- Gain more respect all around

Here are more ways to get involved, help a friend to quit, or best of all, get the help you need to stop smoking for good:

1-877-YES-QUIT



It's free. It's confidential. It's way easy. Telephone counseling helps 15- to 25-year-olds better than it does any other age group!

[www.thetruth.com](http://www.thetruth.com)

It's good to get the truth sometimes. These teens are trying to "keep it real" with just a truck and a few facts about tobacco. Take a look at the "drop dead in front of a major tobacco company" video.

[www.worthit.org](http://www.worthit.org)

Just the site for Texas teens with a chat group and lots of neat information, including help for quitters.

[www.ducktexas.com](http://www.ducktexas.com)

The duck don't lie: tobacco is foul. Learn more about how big tobacco companies are trying to suck you into one of the planet's more disgusting, gross out, addictive, nasty habits.

[www.tarwars.org](http://www.tarwars.org)

A poster contest, a "tar wars" store, and tobacco-free car racing are only part of what this great site from the American Academy of Family Physicians has to offer.

[www.QuitNet.com](http://www.QuitNet.com)

Thousands of teens in Houston and all over Southeast and Central Texas have logged on to this site with its tons of stuff. The way to quit!

[www.texas-step.org](http://www.texas-step.org)

Here, you can find out exactly what toll tobacco takes in Texas.



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You're never  
too young  
to get  
addicted.



Most teen smokers  
believe they will not be  
smoking in five years.

Fact: 75 percent  
of them are still  
smoking five years later.

