Help kids say no to tobacco

Being a parent can be hard. You need to talk to your kids about many things. For example: tobacco.

✔ You can help your kids get the facts about tobacco.
✔ You can help your kids say no to tobacco.

Help and information
Do you have questions about your kids and tobacco? You are not alone. Where can you get help and information?

- in this article from English Express
- from other parents
- from your kids’ school
- from the Smokers’ Helpline (See the box below.)

Smokers’ Helpline: 1-866-332-2322 (free)

Alberta has a special helpline:
- You can get information about tobacco. For example:
  - tobacco and your health
  - ways to quit smoking
  - kids and tobacco

- You can call from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., 7 days a week. Your call is confidential (secret).

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How to talk to kids about tobacco

1. Find out the facts

Find out the facts about smoking and tobacco. It will be easier to talk to your kids.

I didn’t know that spit tobacco can cause cancer.

2. Talk to your kids early and often

Talk to your kids about tobacco when they are young. In Alberta, most schools start to teach about tobacco in Grade 3.

Start with simple facts. For example, fruit is good for your body. Tobacco is bad for your body.

Look. That boy is smoking. Smoking is not cool. It is bad for your body.

Older kids

Talk to your kids about tobacco as they grow up. Older kids need more facts.

Tell your kids, “I don’t want you to smoke.” Ask about your kids’ ideas. Help your kids be active. Try to meet their friends.

Did you know? Most smokers start to smoke when they are teenagers. Some kids have their first cigarette when they are five to eleven years old.

Smoking can cause many health problems. Why do you think those girls smoke?

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3. Talk about peer pressure

Did you know? Some kids start to use tobacco because a friend uses tobacco.

Talk to your kids about peer pressure.
Kids have peers. For example: friends and classmates. Kids feel pressure from their peers.

- Some pressure is good. For example: pressure to do well at school.
- Some pressure is not good. For example: pressure to smoke.

Let’s practice some ways you can say no.

My friends want me to try “spit.” I don’t know what to do.

4. Be a good example

Did you know? Some kids start to use tobacco because a parent or relative uses tobacco.
Many teens get tobacco from friends, relatives or parents.

✔ Don’t use tobacco around kids. Make your home and car smoke-free. Ask friends and relatives not to use tobacco around your kids.

If you use tobacco

✔ Be honest. Talk about how you started. Tell your kids, “I know smoking is bad for me. But it is very hard to quit.”

✔ Do you want to quit smoking? Talk to your doctor. Call the Smokers’ Helpline.

Smokers’ Helpline: 1-866-332-2322 (free)

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Some facts about tobacco

How do people use tobacco?

- People smoke tobacco. For example, they smoke cigarettes, cigars or a pipe.
- People use smokeless tobacco. They often call it “spit” tobacco. They chew on it, suck it or sniff it.

Did you know?
Tobacco has nicotine in it. People become addicted to nicotine very quickly. They crave it. Their body feels like it needs nicotine.

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Tobacco and your body

Tobacco is bad for your body

✔ Smoking tobacco can cause many health problems. For example:
  - lung cancer, mouth cancer
  - heart disease (heart attacks, strokes, high blood pressure)

✔ Using smokeless tobacco can cause many health problems. For example:
  - heart problems
  - mouth cancer
  - problems with your teeth and gums
  - sores in your mouth

Some people with lung disease have breathing problems. They must use oxygen.

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Second-hand smoke is bad for non-smokers

- Some adults and children breathe second-hand smoke. This smoke can cause many health problems. For example:
  - headaches, coughing, breathing problems
  - heart disease, lung disease lung cancer

- Third-hand smoke is bad too. It is smoke that stays on carpets, clothes and other things.

Smoking and pregnant women

- Smoking can cause many health problems for a pregnant woman and her unborn baby. For example:
  - Her baby might be born early. It might be smaller than other babies.
  - The baby might have health problems after it is born.

If you are pregnant and you smoke, try to quit. Try to stay away from second-hand smoke.

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Tobacco and your everyday life

Using tobacco can affect your life in many ways. For example:

✓ You might get sick more often than non-smokers.

✓ It can be harder to play sports.

✓ Your clothes and hair will smell like smoke.

✓ Tobacco is expensive. You will have less money for other things.

Special note: In some cultures, people use tobacco in special ways. For example, they use it during ceremonies. They give it as a gift to elders.

On these two pages, we are not talking about using tobacco in these ways.