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# The Sooner the Better: Why It's Never Too Early to Teach Kids About the Dangers of Smoking

Do you have a teenager and want to help them quit for good? Here are a few steps you can take to get them to put them out for good.

## Talk to them

This should be the first step you take. Find out why they started in the first place and from here, discuss with them why you want them, and why they should, stop smoking. They are your children so they will value your opinions, even if they do occasionally seem stumpy or rebellious. There may be some problems behind it such as issues at school. There are a lot of pressures that kids grow up with in this day and age so as a way of coping, they could have turned to cigarettes.

Smoking is also seen as a sign of maturity and grown up during youth so this could be a reason why they started. During the conversation, you should encourage your teen to feedback what they think the main issues that come with smoking. There is so much information surrounding smoking that it's harder to not know the health problems that come with it. They will be taught about it in lesson time and they will have probably found out about the heart disease etc on the internet. This is where it can be tricky because it's like trying to teach a dog to bark. They already know.

When offering concerns of your own, try appealing to what they will find important. For example, you could try going down the route that when they speak, they will often have smoky, smelly breathe. If they are trying to impress the boys/girls, heaving bad breathe is one way to scare them off. Yellow teeth and fingernails are also side effects that won't appeal to them. Play on the fact that they wouldn't like to look at them if they were on the other side. For the sporty children, discuss with them the difference in how they perform with and without a cigarette. You can demonstrate that they are often or more tired and have less energy while they smoke. Compared to when they previously didn't, they had loads more stamina and could perform at a much higher standard.

## Show them e-cigarettes

If you are unfamiliar, e-cigs are a much healthier alternative to smoking. You may have heard of the term vaping; this is because after exhaling on an e-cig, a cloud of water vapour is produced. The vapour is the product of a coil heating up the e-liquid which contains the nicotine and flavour.

Aside from water and a few sweeteners, that's all that makes up an e-cig. There are no harmful chemicals that can cause your teen to develop cancer, heart disease or heart attacks, which of course can happen as a result of smoking. If you encourage your teen to switch from cigarettes to vaping, you will both see a dramatic increase in health and lifestyle. They will be able to breathe a lot better within a matter of weeks and clear out a lot of the carbon monoxide from

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their body. There is one side effect that you should be aware of: your teen will seem thirsty more often but by keeping fluids up, this will be barely noticed. You could even put a spin on it in that vaping is actually cooler than smoking, not only for the health benefits, but because there is a whole community around it based on different vape tricks. They are known as cloud chasers. These people vape for fun without health risks. The same cannot be said for smoking tobacco.

And we haven't even mentioned that vaping can help your teen quit smoking because it is flexible when it comes to concentrations of nicotine. During the quitting process, they can decrease how much they ingest but still enjoy the vaping tricks and flavours. No one enjoys the taste of a cigarette but vaping e-liquids can be delicious.

## **Create a quitting plan together**

Because of their young age, teens can develop an addiction to the nicotine quickly. You will be able to notice their effects on your child within a couple of weeks at the most.

Sit down and put things on paper. The physical act of writing things down creates a stronger memory than just talking and each time they see it, they will get an urge to not smoke.

As part of the plan, encourage them to decline a cigarette if they are offered. They will be used to accepting from their social group so actually practice with them. Act out a scenario and get them to continually decline the tobacco. This repetition will help them deal with a real life scenario in case they are in a pressured situation. Even suggest to them to hang around with other people. They will most likely say no because they'll be friends. But suggest your teen to hang around with non-smokers friends, not just new people, to keep them away from a smoking environment. Most of all, if they ever slip up, do not get on their case. Quitting smoking is a tough task for anyone at any age so remain supportive. Give them praise for the progress they have already made. Look for what went wrong and identify a solution so they don't fall into the same trap.

While they continue to quit, especially at the early stages, offer some sort of reward. After a week of not smoking, buy them a t shirt, jeans, or anything that'll give them more motivation. After a big milestone, say you'll pay for concert tickets or take them out somewhere. This will give them a target. But don't offer too many rewards and create an expectation. Positive reinforcement is a great motivational method when used correctly but shouldn't be the only method.