

## **The Facts about Smoking**

If someone asked you to put some nail polish remover, arsenic or lead into your body would you do it? How about cyanide, formaldehyde or ammonia? Of course you wouldn't! But every time you or someone around you lights a cigarette that is exactly what you are breathing into your body – plus about 4000 other chemicals. The same goes for cigarettes that are "light". They have the same chemicals as regular cigarettes.

## **Did you know?**

- About 1/2 of all Americans who keep smoking will die because of their habit.
- Most people start smoking as teenagers. Twenty-two percent of high school students are current smokers. That's more than 1-in-5 students!
- Smoking harms nearly every organ of the body.
- Cigarette smoking is the single most preventable cause of premature death in the United States.
- Smokers who quit the habit will, on average, live longer and have fewer years living with health problems caused by smoking.

## **Other people's smoke**

Cigarette smoking causes many health problems for the smoker. Even if you are not a smoker, other people's smoking habit can affect your health.

- Other people's smoke, sometimes called secondhand smoke, is a known cause of cancer in humans, according to the Environmental Protection Agency.
- In adults who do not smoke, secondhand smoke causes about 3,000 lung cancer deaths and over 35,000 heart disease deaths in the United States each year.
- Asthma in children gets worse when they are around other people's smoke.
- Other people's smoke contributes to 26,000 new cases of asthma in children every year.

### **Questions to ask yourself if you smoke**

If you are a smoker and have thought about quitting, ask yourself the following questions:

- Do you know someone who has had health problems because of their smoking?
- Do you feel that you could get a smoking-related disease? Does this worry you?
- Do believe that the benefits of quitting are greater than the benefits of continuing to smoke?
- Do you believe you could make an honest attempt to quit smoking?

If you answered yes to the above questions, you are more likely to be able to quit smoking.

### **Ready to quit?**

Quitting smoking improves your health and also brings down your chances of getting diseases caused by smoking. If you or someone you know is ready to quit smoking, here are some helpful tips to get started.

- Talk to your doctor about patches you put on your skin or nasal sprays that help you fight the desire for a cigarette.
- Medicines prescribed by your doctor can also help you quit.
- Gum and lozenges that help you quit smoking are available at grocery stores and pharmacies without a prescription.
- Attend a quit smoking class. Most classes are free or charge very little.

If you think you could be ready to kick the habit, contact us to learn more about how you can improve your health and your life. To get more information about quit smoking programs or to sign up for a quit smoking workshop, call Tammi Reynolds at (708) 567-8633.

Sources:

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

<http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco>

<http://www.stepupnc.com>

<http://www.lungusa.org>

ETR Associates. 1998. *Other People's Smoke*. [Brochure]. Santa Cruz, CA: Quackenbush, Marcia.