

How to Talk to Your Teen About Smoking

You are a great influence in your child's life and can play a big role in encouraging your child not to smoke - even your teenager. Here are a few tips to help jump-start the conversation with your child on staying tobacco-free.

- Tell your children honestly and directly that you don't want them to smoke cigarettes, e-cigarettes, or any other tobacco products. Give them clear, consistent messages about the risks of smoking, including the fact that nicotine is addictive.
- Start talking to your kids about smoking when they are 5 or 6 years old and continue through their high school years. Many kids start smoking at age 11 and some are addicted by age 14 – so the earlier you start talking, the better.
- Explain the health dangers of smoking, as well as the unpleasant physical aspects (such as bad breath, discolored teeth and wrinkled skin).
- Set a good example for your kids by not smoking. Parents who smoke are twice as likely to have children who smoke. The American Lung Association has helped more than one million people quit smoking and we can help you too.
- If you have a smoking history, tell your kids about how difficult it is to quit smoking and how much easier it would have been if you'd never started smoking in the first place. Honest conversation will help reduce their interest in ever starting.
- Establish a smoke-free policy in your home – indoors and outside.
- Tell your child that you support their tobacco-free school.
- Find out if your children have any friends that smoke. Talk with your kids about ways to refuse a cigarette without losing a friend.
- If you catch your teen smoking, avoid threats and ultimatums. Ask a few questions and find out why your child is smoking; he or she may want to be accepted by a peer group or want your attention. Talk about what changes can be made in your teen's life to help him or her stop smoking.

For more information and facts to share with your children visit [Lung.org/stop-smoking](https://www.lung.org/stop-smoking).



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