

## More Facts About Tobacco, Addiction, And Your Children

Just about everyone agrees—even smokers—that the use of tobacco is damaging to one's health. Nonetheless, while the percent of smokers in the United States has declined from 42 percent in 1965 (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1982, p. ix) to just under 33 percent in 1983 (U.S. Center for Health Statistics, 1984), the total number of smokers has remained almost constant. And in some categories, such as for women between 20-34 the percent of smokers increased from 1980 to 1983.

Employers have a significant role to play in helping smokers quit. As the Assistant Secretary for Health of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services stated in the 1984 Surgeon General's report on smoking, "Smokers can realize a substantial health benefit from quitting smoking, no matter how long they have smoked." Approximately 10-15 years after quitting, a smoker's risk of dying is nearly the same as for those who have never smoked. According to one major study, death from all causes was almost 30 percent lower among those who quit, compared to those who continued to smoke, after just six years of abstinence.

But for those who continue smoking, the health facts are rather frightening. Each year, 340,000 persons die prematurely from smoking-related illnesses. The Surgeon General has stated that unless smoking habits change, 1 in every 10 people living today could die prematurely of heart disease alone. In addition to smoking's contributions to heart disease, it is estimated that 30 percent of all cancers are caused by smoking and that 85 percent of all lung cancers are due to cigarette smoking. So, from the point of view of the health of one's employees, smoking is a bad business.

Here are just a few more facts about the impact of smoking on the health of one's employees:

\*Heavy smokers (two or more packs per day) are three to four times more likely to die of cancer than non-smokers and, overall, the risk to smokers is two times greater than for those who don't smoke.

### Smoking A Risk Factor For Drug Abuse Among Teens

New data from the National Institution of Drug Abuse suggests that cigarette smoking is a risk factor for drug abuse in teenagers. Jack Henningfield, Ph.D., chief of clinical pharmacology at the institute, reports adolescents who smoke cigarettes are 14 times more likely to smoke marijuana and 32 times more likely to use cocaine than those who do not smoke.

Addiction to nicotine "teaches a person to use a shortcut to deal with anxiety, weight control, stress, or boredom," and for adolescents who are going through changes, "using a drug to cope short-circuits natural development and problem-solving abilities," says Dr. Henningfield. He warns that cigarettes are particularly dangerous because they are easily accessible to young children who can get hooked on them before they are old enough to evaluate smoking and make the choice not to smoke.

Dr. Henningfield adds that learning to inhale makes other smokable drugs, such as crack, more inviting.



\*Heavy smokers are 15 to 25 times more likely to die of lung cancer than non-smokers, and overall, smokers are ten times more likely to die of lung cancer than non-smokers.

\*\*Eighty to 90 percent of such long-term severe diseases as emphysema and chronic bronchitis are related to smoking.

\*It is estimated that 30 percent of all cancers are caused by smoking. That means that 138,000 Americans will die of cancer this year because of smoking.

\*More than 550,000 Americans will die of coronary heart disease this year, and up to 30 percent of those deaths will be attributable to cigarette smoking.

\*Heavy smokers have a 200 percent greater risk of dying from coronary heart disease than non-smokers, and overall risk for all smokers regardless of the amount smoked, is 70 percent greater than for those who do not smoke.

\*Evidence demonstrates that smoking during pregnancy has significant adverse effects upon the well-being of the fetus and the health of a newborn, including causing lower birth weight infants and increasing the risks of spontaneous abortion and neonatal deaths.

\*Children of smoking parents have an increased prevalence of respiratory symptoms and have increased frequency of bronchitis and pneumonia early in life.

\*Cigarette smoke contains over 4,000 chemicals. Many are poisonous. More than 40 of them cause cancer.

\*Cigarette smoke is harmful to all those who inhale it, including non-smokers.

\*Your children are twice as likely to be smokers when they grow up.

Sure, you know smoking is bad for your health. But no one ever thinks, "Smoking will really hurt me." If you smoke, the odds are against you. Just think about the facts.

—Submitted by Vernon Kennedy

## Understanding Illnesses Caused During Food Preparation

We've all been hearing about the sick or dead children who ate contaminated hamburger. The contamination refers to a bacteria call "Escherichia coli", most often called "E coli".

This bacteria used to be found a lot in drinking water, which is why we test water supplies on a regular basis, to be sure it is not contaminated.

We now know that there are four types of E. coli. One type causes infantile diarrhea; another causes traveler's disease associated with travel in foreign countries. Another type causes a dysentery-like illness with diarrhea, abdominal pain, vomiting, and fever.

The fourth type of E. coli produces a severe illness characterized by bloody diarrhea caused by hemorrhaging of the blood vessels in the large intestine and severe abdominal cramps. This may lead to other complications in children that could cause kidney failure. To say the least, this is a very serious illness. If you see symptoms of E coli illness in your children, be sure to get them adequate medical attention as soon as possible.

E. coli used to be considered less harmful though something we tried to eliminate. The major source of bacteria is from human excreta which contaminates water and food. That's the reason for signs in the rest rooms requiring employees to wash their hands before returning to work.

It is the same reason why parents should teach their children to wash their hands after they use the bathroom.

Flushing the toilet is also important. Children may find all kinds of handles on toilets that are different from the ones in their home. Some you push with your

### "I Never Thought It Would Happen To Me."

*"My greatest regret is that I did not stop smoking earlier, not necessarily for me, but for my family. I'm at a point in my life where my husband and I could do so many things, but we can't do them because I'm disabled."*

*Ruth B. Age 57—Emphysema  
Smoked 1 1/2 packs per day for 40 years*

*"I've always worried about getting lung cancer; the possibility of heart attack never entered my mind."*

*Joe F. Age 38—Heart Attack  
Smoked 3 packs per day for 20 years*

*"I've probably thrown away 15 years of my life for the privilege of smoking."*

*Bob S. Age 54—Lung Cancer  
Smoked 1 1/2 packs per day for 40 years*

*"Now that I have the time to do the things I've always wanted to do, I'm not so sure I'm going to have the time anymore."*

*George K. Age 63—Cancer of the Larynx  
Smoked 1 pack per day for 45 years*

foot, while other facilities have a button in the wall you push. Show your children where these handles are, so they will flush.

Good sanitation in food preparation is very important. Wash your hands before you begin. If you are sick or coughing, you should not be handling food for other people. Sick people can spread the E. coli bacteria and other illnesses when they handle food.

Cook meat until the red does not show. Heat will kill the bacteria, but the heat must get to the center of the hamburger patties for a long time in order to kill the bacteria. Be sure to wash kitchen tools used on the raw meat before you touch the cooked meat with them.

When you have finished with the meal, scrub counters and cutting boards with bleach and soapy water before you use them to prepare other foods.

If you are interested in learning more about food-borne illnesses, contact your local office of the Department of Health and Human Services.

—Reprinted from *Spilyay Tymoo*

