

# The Dangers of Smoking for Children

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## NO SMOKING IS SAFE

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It does not matter what type of smoking it is – it is not safe. Smoking is the leading preventable cause of death in the U.S. It negatively affects everyone around it. No matter what age you are, smoking will harm your body. It is also very addictive for adults and children. All kids are vulnerable. Three out of four teens who smoke in high school will still be smoking as adults. Even if you only smoke occasionally, smoking puts your health and others at risk for diseases.



## SECONDHAND SMOKING

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You are not just hurting yourself, you're hurting others too. For children, secondhand smoke can cause asthma attacks, ear infections, respiratory infections, shortage of lung growth, and sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS). Other health issues that can occur for adults include coronary heart disease, stroke, and lung cancer. And you don't have to be smoking yourself to get these; you just have to be around someone who is smoking. There is no risk-free level of exposure to secondhand smoke. The dangers that come from smoking affect both those who do it and those around them.

## DANGERS OF SMOKING

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Cigarette smoking harms nearly every organ of the body, causes disease, and reduces your health. Cancer is also a common danger that comes from smoking. Lung cancer is the most typical, but it can

also cause bladder and mouth cancer. In fact, smoking is able to cause cancer almost anywhere in the body including: bladder, blood, cervix, colon and rectum, esophagus, kidney and ureter, larynx, liver, oropharynx (throat, tongue, soft palate, and tonsils), pancreas, stomach, trachea, and bronchus. There is also a greater risk for diabetes. It is a reason for rheumatoid arthritis. Smoking increases risk of: stillbirths, low birth weight, and sudden infant death syndrome. It can affect bone health, can cause tooth loss, increases risk for cataracts, and effects the body through inflammation and decreased immune function. Smoking places irreversible scarring on the lungs.

Every cigarette shortens your life by 11 minutes. Smoking causes more than 480,000 deaths each year in the U.S. More than ten times as many Americans have died prematurely from smoking than in all the U.S. wars.

## NICOTINE EXPOSURE

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Cigarettes, cigars, and vaping or e-cigs contain a chemical called nicotine. Nicotine is a harmful chemical found in tobacco products. In actuality, nicotine is a poison. It causes immediate reaction in the body such as: increased blood pressure, stimulated heart, raised blood fat levels, and constricted blood vessels. It is extremely addictive and goes straight to the brain. Children and teens are more sensitive to the addiction of nicotine than adults due to the brain still developing. This quicker addiction can rewire the brain and have a greater chance for them to become addicted to other drugs. It also increases the chance of children and teens to become lifelong smokers.



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## VAPING

While some believe vaping is less dangerous, the dangers still exist. The mix of chemicals that work together while vaping are not safe for your body. The nicotine within can harm the brain development. The vaping process can also lead to a possible release of formaldehyde into the lungs. Formaldehyde is a preservative substance and is dangerous for the body. Formaldehyde causes symptoms such as: sore throat, cough, itchy eyes, nosebleeds, respiratory problems, and cancer.

## REASONS TO STOP

There are several reasons to quit smoking. It reduces cardiovascular risks. Risks for heart attacks declines within 24 hours. The chance of cancer also decreases. Your blood will be less likely to create dangerous blood clots. Quitting helps prevent new DNA damage. It reduces belly fat. White blood cell counts will begin to return to normal. The immune system becomes stronger along with the bones and muscles. Quitting will help to break the cycle of addiction, keep hearing sharp, preserve vision, clear up blemishes, and brighten your smile. It is better for physical looks and overall health. And you will save money.

## BE PREPARED

The stopping process is challenging, but it's worth it. Set your mind to stopping. Pick a reason to stop and focus on that through the withdraw process. This will help you stay motivated. Make a plan to fight cravings and avoid things that trigger the addiction. Stay away from feelings, people, or

situations that would cause you to smoke. Stay positive and set rewards for yourself when you reach certain time limits – like 24 hours without smoking. Treat yourself to something like chocolate or a coffee, or watch your favorite movie. You do not have to go through withdraw alone. Tell a friend, doctor, or your family you are quitting and ask them for their support. There are also quit-smoking programs and information available. Don't be afraid to ask for help.

## NEED MORE INFORMATION

Center for Disease Control and Prevention, [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov), (1-800-QUIT-NOW)

The Rehab Center, [www.rehabcenter.net/dangers-of-vaping-e-cigs](http://www.rehabcenter.net/dangers-of-vaping-e-cigs)

Smoke Free Teen, [www.teen.smokefree.gov](http://www.teen.smokefree.gov)

## APEC IS HERE TO HELP

APEC provides free training, information, and consultation to families. Visit our training calendar for more information about learning opportunities at [www.alabamaparentcenter.com](http://www.alabamaparentcenter.com) or call our center.

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