



STUB OUT SMOKING BEFORE GETTING HOOKED

Despite all the health warnings we get about smoking, one in five of us is a smoker. Yet even as new smokers pick up the habit every day, more people are starting to wish they never had.

Did you know that the vast majority of smokers want to quit? But simply stopping is not that easy.

STOPPING IS MORE DIFFICULT THAN STARTING



Quitting is a difficult challenge because smoking has an addictive hold on the user. Cigarettes are designed to rapidly deliver nicotine, the main drug found in tobacco, to your brain – releasing chemicals that make you feel good. This endless cycle changes the way your brain works, makes you feel as if you need nicotine to feel good, and causes withdrawal when you try to stop. Because of these dangers, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared **World No Tobacco Day on 31 May**.

If smoking is so addictive and quitting is so difficult, an obvious solution is to make sure more people never become smokers in the first place.

Every day, up to 3 000 teens under the age of 18 try their first cigarette. More than 400 of them will become regular smokers. What's more, people who start smoking at an early age are more likely to become seriously hooked compared to those who start smoking at a later stage. Simply put, it's more difficult for younger people to stop once they've started.

You can help by encouraging the youngsters in your life, whether your children, siblings or nieces and nephews, to steer clear. **Here's how.**

TALK TO YOUNG PEOPLE ABOUT THE DANGERS OF SMOKING

Rather than simply forbidding smoking, explain why the habit is damaging and why starting is a bad idea:

- Smoking causes smelly hair and clothes, stained teeth and bad breath. All deadly for a teen's social life!
- It affects the lungs and heart, making it difficult to keep up in sport and favourite activities like dancing.
- Because smoking is so addictive, it can easily go from one cigarette at a party to a daily habit.
- A pack of cigarettes can cost up to R50. Calculate how much they could save if they quit smoking.
- Help them with strategies for dealing with peer pressure to smoke and how to resist the temptation to start.



SET A POSITIVE EXAMPLE



The importance of role modelling when it comes to smoking cannot be overstated. Children are more influenced by what we do than what we say. Research has shown that kids who grow up with parents who smoke are more likely to start smoking themselves.

IT'S NEVER TOO LATE TO QUIT

What if you're still a smoker yourself? It's never too late to quit if you've already started. Our bodies have an incredible capacity to heal and recover from the damage caused by smoking, even if you've been doing it for years. Quitting can have immediate health benefits, and these improve over time. Just 20 minutes after your last cigarette, your blood pressure and heart rate begin to return to normal levels. After one year without smoking, your risk of heart disease is half that of a continuing smoker.

These local resources are available to help you quit smoking:

- Cancer Association of South Africa (CANSA@) **eKick Butt** is an online programme for stopping.
- **Byegwaai** is an app to help you kick the habit.



Need help in giving up smoking? Reach out to our employee health and wellness programme for support.

References

American Heart Association
KidsHealth®

- ▶ Education department toll free: **0800 111 011**
- ▶ Send a USSD to: ***134*664*38#**
- ▶ Email: **wced@mhg.co.za**

Let us stay mindful of caring for one another and ourselves

