

Parents—Help Keep Your Kids Tobacco-Free

- Kids who use tobacco may
 - Cough and have asthma attacks more often and develop respiratory problems leading to more sick days, more doctor bills, and poorer athletic performance.
 - Be more likely to use alcohol and other drugs such as cocaine and marijuana.
 - Become addicted to tobacco and find it extremely hard to quit.
- Spit tobacco and cigars are not safe alternatives to cigarettes; low-tar and additive-free cigarettes are not safe either.
- Tobacco use is the single most preventable cause of death in the United States causing heart disease, cancers, and strokes.

Take a Stand at Home—Early and Often

- Despite the impact of movies, music, and TV, parents can be the GREATEST INFLUENCE in their kids' lives.
- Talk directly to children about the risks of tobacco use; if friends or relatives died from tobacco-related illnesses, let your kids know.
- If you use tobacco, you can still make a difference. Your best move, of course, is to try to quit. Meanwhile, don't use tobacco in your children's presence, don't offer it to them, and don't leave it where they can easily get it.
- Start the dialog about tobacco use at age 5 or 6 and continue through their high school years. Many kids start using tobacco by age 11, and many are addicted by age 14.
 - Know if your kids' friends use tobacco. Talk about ways to refuse tobacco.
 - Discuss with kids the false glamorization of tobacco on billboards, and other media, such as movies, TV, and magazines.



Make a Difference in Your Community

- Vote with your pocketbook. Support businesses that don't sell tobacco to kids. Frequent restaurants and other places that are tobacco-free.
- Be sure your schools and all school events (i.e., parties, sporting events, etc.) are tobacco-free.
- Partner with your local tobacco prevention programs. Call your local health department or your cancer, heart, or lung association to learn how you can get involved.