



Preventing Teen Smoking

Most smokers take up the habit when they're in their teens. Currently, about one in every five Canadian teenagers smokes.



Why is it significant?

Each year, tobacco-related illnesses kill 45,000 Canadians. Besides causing lung cancer, smoking is also associated with many other serious health problems, including chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), heart disease, stroke, kidney disease, breast cancer, impotence, pneumonia and osteoporosis.

What else should I be aware of?

Even if your child doesn't smoke, they could still be putting their health at risk with exposure to secondhand smoke. Educate your child about the dangers of secondhand smoke and encourage them to avoid it as much as possible.



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What can I do?

- ✓ You're a role model: don't smoke yourself. If you are a smoker, take steps to quit immediately.
- ✓ Talk with your child about smoking. Make sure they're aware of the enormous health risks and monetary costs. (A pack-a-day smoker will spend about \$2,500 a year on the habit.)
- ✓ Most teens start smoking because of peer pressure. Seeing images of celebrities smoking can also play a role. To counteract these

influences, encourage your child to be an independent, critical thinker, not someone easily led by others.

- ✓ Help maintain your child's emotional health by addressing any issues you may have as a family. Be ready and willing to seek family counselling.
- ✓ Since many people smoke to cope with stress, work with your child to build their stress resilience. Let them know it's safe to talk to you.

- ✓ Contact the Canadian Lung Association at <http://alberta.quitnet.com> or 1-866-332-2322.
- ✓ Learn more about preventing teen smoking by going to www.makinghealthhappen.com.



Visit MakingHealthHappen.com for an abundance of health and wellness resources.