

9 Ways to Keep Your Teen Smoke-Free



The eye rolling, the messy room, the homework procrastination. Some things are an inevitable part of being a teenager. As they push for their independence, you push back with rules and parameters. One way they might test the limits is by smoking. Nearly a quarter of high school students use tobacco products of some type, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. But don't accept smoking as another inevitability.



Try these nine tips to keep your teen smoke-free:

1. Talk to them before they're teens. Plant the seeds of your smoke-free strategy long before your kids hit high school. Discuss the dangers of smoking when they're in elementary school, and keep the conversation going as they enter middle school and start to face peer pressure.

2. Set a good example. Children of parents who smoke are up to 20 percent more likely to become smokers than those whose parents don't smoke, according to a study published in the journal *Pediatrics*. If you smoke now, quit! At the very least, don't smoke in front of your children.

3. Play up the bad sides. No matter what your kids see in movies or on TV, smoking isn't glamorous. Tell them how lighting up causes wrinkles and bad breath, and will make their clothes reek of smoke. Plus, it's expensive! The American Lung Association estimates that a pack-a-day habit can cost more than \$1,800 a year. And those are just the superficial downsides!

4. Predict their future. The real consequences of smoking include a higher risk of lung cancer, heart disease, stroke, diabetes, emphysema, gum disease, and damage to the arteries. According to the American Cancer Society, about half of people who smoke will die because of its effects.

5. Establish clear expectations. You might think your anti-smoking rules are obvious. Wrong. Teens need well-defined expectations. Make yours clear: You won't allow them or their friends to smoke in your house or car. If they choose to smoke, lay out the consequences.





6. Let school help you. If your teen is on a sports team or does other extracurricular activities like music or drama, they might face disciplinary actions or be kicked off the team if caught smoking.

7. Don't just look for smoke. Steer your kids away from smokeless tobacco, too. Chewing tobacco contains at least 30 cancer-causing substances. "Smokeless" e-cigarettes contain nicotine and can cause respiratory and cardiovascular problems, headaches, and dizziness. Public health officials also believe that e-cigarette usage can encourage young people to start smoking the real thing.

8. Keep your cool. If you find out your teen is smoking, don't freak out. It's likely they're just experimenting. If it has become a more serious habit, try not to overreact. Confront them calmly and talk about why they want to smoke and why you are against it; then offer your support to help them quit.

9. Help them become smoke-free their way. Find out what will motivate your teen to quit. A visit to your family physician? A support group? If that's not their thing, suggest the National Cancer Institute's [SmokefreeTXT program](#). Targeted texts from the service can help your teen keep their promise to quit.



If you or your teen needs help to quit smoking, Adena can help. To find out more about our smoking cessation program, call **740-542-LUNG** (5864) or visit adena.org/quitsmoking.