

# Stop Smoking before it Starts

The idea of talking to your kids about the dangers of smoking and tobacco use can be scary and intimidating, and you might even wonder at times if you are having any positive impact on them at all. The fact is, you are! Current research indicates that parental involvement plays a significant role in a child's ability to make decisions.



## The Facts

- In 2008, every day approximately 1,000 young people (under the age of 18) became daily smokers.
- In the US, 20% of high school students report having smoked a cigarette in the last month
- Smoking is the leading cause of premature, preventable death and disease in the United States. It has been estimated that more Americans die from cigarette-related illnesses than from alcohol, car accidents, suicide, AIDS, homicide, and illegal drugs combined.

## Heart to Heart

As previously mentioned, having that heart to heart talk about smoking is hard, but regardless of the worry you may feel about your child's reaction, it's something that needs to be discussed. This is especially true if you feel that your child may be at risk for developing the behavior or if you suspect they've already started. Here are some suggestions to help you break the ice:

1. Keep it casual---kids are less likely to listen if they feel they're being lectured to.
2. Practice active listening---listen, understand and evaluate what you hear in a non-judgmental way. You will have a better experience because the tone of the conversation will be more positive.
3. Don't limit it to just cigarettes---make sure to talk with them about the dangers of tobacco in general (chew, hookah, and other non-traditional tobacco products). It is important for them to understand that other forms of tobacco are just as addictive and deadly.
4. Keep it short---while adults are aware of the long-term consequences of smoking and tobacco use, children and teens can relate more easily to short term ones such as yellow teeth, smelly clothes, or bad breath.
5. Establish your values---Explain to your kids what your personal values are and why you have decided not to smoke. This can be started even when your children are young!

Remember, you can and do make a difference!

For more information, please visit:

<http://www.parentfurther.com/high-risk-behaviors/tobacco>

The TRUTH about the use of flavors in tobacco products:

<http://www.tobaccofreeutah.org/flvrdtob.pdf>

The TRUTH about Hookah:

<http://www.tobaccofreeutah.org/truthabouthookah.pdf>

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