



HELPING YOUR TEEN WITH TOBACCO USE

If you are a parent who does not smoke, you may find it difficult to understand why your teenager does. You want to help but may be confused where to start. First, you need to understand WHY your adolescent smokes. Here are some likely reasons:

- **The Tobacco Industry:** Advertising often portrays smoking with looking cool, growing up, and living on the wilder side. These promotional tactics have been proven effective in gaining the attention of teenagers.
- **Peer Pressure:** Social pressure has a strong influence on teenagers. They want to fit in and it is often difficult to resist imitating the actions of friends.
- **Low Self-Esteem:** Teenage years are sometimes filled with change and uncertainty. They may not have enough confidence to say "no" to cigarettes at this time.
- **Desire to keep weight down:** Teenage girls are very often concerned with body image. They believe smoking will keep them thin through suppressing their appetites.
- **Parents/Relatives Smoke:** Teenagers often mold their actions after the adults close to them.

Supporting Your Teen While Quitting:

- Express your support openly. Ask your teenager what you can do to help.
- Listen to your teenager.
- Help your teen think of healthy alternatives to smoking: eating fresh fruits and vegetables.
- Help your teen plan something fun and rewarding for the first tobacco free day.
- Be sympathetic. Try to remain patient with this difficult task.
- If you are a smoker, don't smoke around your child or offer to buy them cigarettes.
- Make your home smoke-free.

For a tobacco cessation appointment call TRICARE at 1-800-404-4506

Washington state quit line at 1-800-QUIT NOW or go online to <http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/tips4youth.htm>