



# THE REAL COST: HEALTH COSTS

Despite significant progress over the past few decades in reducing the number of people who use tobacco, these downward trends have slowed in recent years among youth. In fact, each day in the United States more than 3,200 youth under age 18 smoke their first cigarette, and more than 700 youth under age 18 become daily smokers.

Educating teens about the harms of tobacco use in a way that is personally relevant to them can be difficult, especially since many teens believe they won't get addicted and that the long-term health consequences of smoking don't apply to them. But there are some "costs" of tobacco use that do resonate with teens, such as cosmetic health effects like tooth loss and skin damage. Highlighting consequences that teens are concerned about is an effective approach to reducing youth tobacco use.

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BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE FDA.



Sources: Full sources for all facts are available at [www.fda.gov/therealcost](http://www.fda.gov/therealcost)

## QUICK FACTS

- > Lifelong smokers die an average of 10 years earlier than nonsmokers.
- > Smokers have more lung infections than nonsmokers, and a person doesn't have to be a long-time smoker to have an asthma attack that is triggered by tobacco smoke.
- > People under 20 years of age have lungs that are still growing, and smoking stunts that growth. Teens who smoke may end up as adults with lungs that never grow to their full potential or perform at full capacity. Such damage is permanent and increases the risk of chronic bronchitis and emphysema later in life.
- > Smoking causes bad breath, may stain teeth and causes gum disease that can lead to tooth loss.
- > Smoking accelerates skin aging, which could lead to premature wrinkles.
- > Smokeless tobacco use causes cancers of the mouth, pancreas and esophagus. It can also cause gum disease and tooth loss. Dippers and chewers often develop white patches in their mouths that can turn cancerous.