

# TOBACCO 101

Think about your school and all your friends you see every day. Now, think about the fact that about one out of three of those who start smoking will die prematurely as a result. This is the kind of stuff the tobacco companies won't tell you. But we will!

## GENERAL FACTS

- Tobacco use kills more than 400,000 Americans each year – more than alcohol, AIDS, car crashes, illegal drugs, murders, and suicides COMBINED.
- Each day about 4,000 kids (under 18) try smoking for the first time, and another 1,000 more kids become new regular, daily smokers.
- Adult male smokers lose an average of 13 years of life.
- Adult female smokers lose an average of 15 years of life.
- The chemical nicotine - found in cigarettes and other tobacco products - is an addictive drug, which is why it is so hard for people to quit using tobacco once they start.
- Lung cancer, throat cancer, heart disease, stroke and emphysema are just some of the painful, life-threatening diseases linked with smoking. Smoking also is associated with cancers of the mouth, larynx, esophagus, pancreas, cervix, kidney, stomach and bladder.
- Smoking limits the amount of oxygen in the blood, reducing your stamina for sports and other physical activities.
- Smoking turns your teeth and fingernails yellow, makes your hair, clothes and breath smell gross, and causes premature wrinkling of your skin.

## YOUTH SMOKING RATES

- Almost 90 percent of adults who have ever been regular smokers began smoking by the time they were 18.
- More than 6 million children under age 18 alive today will eventually die from smoking-related disease, unless current rates are reversed.

## TOBACCO ADVERTISING AND MARKETING

- The tobacco industry spends over \$13.3 billion a year, more than \$36 million a day, on advertising and marketing to attract new customers.
- From 1998 to 2005, tobacco industry spending to market their deadly products increased by almost 95 percent.
- Tobacco companies spend over \$23 million a year on lobbying the U.S. Congress and contributions to federal candidates and political parties.
- Cigarette and spit-tobacco companies continue to advertise heavily at retail outlets near schools and playgrounds, with large ads and signs clearly visible from outside the stores.
- Between 1989 and 1993, when advertising for the new Joe Camel campaign jumped from \$27 million to \$43 million, Camel's share among youth increased by more than 50 percent. The adult share didn't change at all.
- In August 2006, U.S. District Court Judge Gladys Kessler stated in her Final Opinion of a landmark case against the tobacco companies that "... [tobacco companies] continue to engage in many practices which target youth, and deny that they do so...Defendants continue to track youth behavior and preferences and market to youth using imagery which appeals to the needs and desires of adolescents. Defendants are well aware that over eighty percent of adult smokers began smoking before the age of 18, and therefore know that securing the youth market is critical to their survival. There is therefore no reason, especially given their long history of denial and deceit, to trust their assurances that they will not continue...their marketing to youth."
- A 1995 study in the Journal of the National Cancer Institute found that teens are more likely to be influenced to smoke by cigarette advertising than by peer pressure.
- In its latest scheme to target youth, R.J. Reynolds, the second largest tobacco company in the U.S. and producers of the Camel brand, is now marketing a new line of "Light and Luscious" cigarettes—Camel No.9—in slick, shiny pink and black packaging. R.J. Reynolds began its aggressive marketing of this new product by running colorful print ads with a floral motif in magazines popular among teenage girls such as Glamour, Vogue and US Weekly. It is estimated that R.J. Reynolds spent between \$25 and \$50 million to launch Camel No.9. Evidence has consistently shown that teens prefer to smoke the brands that tobacco companies spend the most money marketing.

## ETHNICITY AND SMOKING

- 23 percent of high school students are current smokers.
- Among African-American high school students, 12.9 percent are current smokers.
- Among Hispanic high school students, 22 percent are current smokers.
- Among Native Americans and Alaskan Native high school students, 23.1 percent are current smokers.
- Among Asian-American high school students, 11.3 percent are current smokers.