**Section 1: Smoking Stinks!**

Smoking is one of the worst things kids or adults can do to their bodies. Yet every single day about 3,900 kids between the ages 12 and 17 start smoking. Most middle school students don't smoke — only about 1 in 16 does. And most high school students don't smoke either — about 1 in 5 does (that means 4 out of 5 don't). But why do those who smoke ever begin? There's more than just one answer. Some kids may start smoking just because they're ***curious***. Others may like the idea of doing something dangerous — something grownups don't want them to do. Still others might know lots of people who smoke and they might think it's a way to act or look like an adult. Fortunately, fewer people are starting smoking than a few years ago. Maybe that's because more and more people have learned that smoking and tobacco use can cause cancer and [heart disease](http://kidshealth.org/en/kids/heart-disease.html). But sometimes kids can't really think that far into the future to worry about an illness they might not get for many years.

**Section 2:** **What Are Smoking and Smokeless Tobacco?**

***Tobacco*** is a plant that can be smoked in cigarettes, pipes, or cigars. It's the same plant that's in smokeless tobacco, known as dip, chew, snuff, spit, or chewing tobacco. Smokeless tobacco is not lit or inhaled like tobacco in cigarettes, pipes, and cigars. Instead, smokeless tobacco is put between the lip and gum and sucked on inside the mouth.

Tobacco contains ***nicotine***, a chemical that causes a tingly or pleasant feeling — but that feeling only lasts for a little while. Nicotine is also ***addictive***. That means that if you start to use nicotine, your body and mind will become so used to it that you'll need to have it just to feel OK.

Anyone who starts smoking could become addicted to it. If you're addicted to something, it's very hard to stop doing it, even if you want to. Some kids get addicted right away. And adults are often addicted, which is why so many of them have a hard time quitting smoking.

**Section 3: Why Is It So Bad for You?**

Cigarettes and smokeless tobacco kill hundreds of thousands of Americans every year. You know those rubber bracelets that were created to bring attention to different causes? The ***Campaign*** for Tobacco-Free Kids created a red one with the number 1,200 on it. Why 1,200? That's the number of people who die each day due to smoking. The nicotine and other poisonous chemicals in tobacco cause lots of diseases, like heart problems and some kinds of cancer. If you smoke, you hurt your [lungs](http://kidshealth.org/en/kids/lungs.html) and heart each time you light up. It also can make it more difficult for blood to move around in the body, so smokers may feel tired and cranky. The longer you smoke, the worse the damage becomes.

**Section 4: What's It Like?**

Usually, people don't like smoking or chewing tobacco at first. Your body is smart, and it knows when it's being poisoned. When people try smoking for the first time, they often cough a lot and feel pain or burning in their throat and lungs. This is your lungs' way of trying to protect you and tell you to keep them smoke free. Also, many people say that they feel sick to their stomachs or even throw up. If someone accidentally swallows chewing tobacco, they may be sick for hours. Yuck.