

Short lesson on NICOTINE addiction that can be adapted to many grade levels.

**Mark Twain once said that quitting smoking is easy. He'd done it hundreds of times!**

**NO FORM OF TOBACCO IS SAFE!!! NOT CIGARETTES, NOT CIGARS, NOT CHEWING TOBACCO OR PIPES. THEY ARE ALL DANGEROUS BECAUSE THEY ALL CONTAIN CHEMICALS THAT KILL!!!!**

Many people try over and over again to quit smoking, but just can't seem to get it right. Some of the people who are able to quit say that giving up cigarettes was the hardest thing they've ever done. It's so hard that only three out of every one hundred smokers who try to quit smoking have long-term success. The reason that so many people have such a hard time giving up smoking is because of **Nicotine**. Just what is nicotine? It's a poisonous ingredient found in products made from the dried leaves of the tobacco plant, such as **cigarettes, pipe tobacco, cigars, and chewing tobacco**. It's a powerful drug that acts in the brain and throughout the body. This drug is so powerful that only two or three drops of pure nicotine (less than 50mg) placed on the tongue will bring quick death to an adult. Besides being poisonous, nicotine is addictive, just as addictive as heroin, cocaine, and alcohol. (CDC). When the smoke from a cigarette is inhaled it first travels to the lungs. From there all of the dangerous substances enter the blood stream and are taken to all of the major organs. It only takes 8 seconds for nicotine to reach the brain. It is here that the addiction takes place because nicotine changes the way the brain processes information.

### **Just what does addictive mean?**

Have you ever tried to eat just one potato chip, or how about one Doritos, or one M&M? It's pretty hard not to take a second helping of something you really like, isn't it? Well, you can't compare an addiction to nicotine to wanting to eat more than one Doritos. That's because if you get addicted to a drug, you'll most likely go through withdrawal symptoms when you suddenly try to stop using it. If you get addicted to nicotine and try to give it up, you may go through any of these withdrawal symptoms:

- restlessness
- eating more than usual
- impatience, frustration, anger
- difficulty concentrating
- excessive hunger
- depression
- loss of energy/fatigue, dizziness
- stomach or bowel problems
- headaches
- sweating
- insomnia, (not being able to sleep)
- heart palpitations, tremors
- having a strong desire to smoke again.

It would be pretty bad to have to go through any of these symptoms, but when you try to give up using nicotine, you may suffer through a combination of them. The tobacco companies don't want us to know about the suffering people go through when they try to give up smoking. They don't want us to know that nicotine is so addictive that people who have had cancer of the larynx which required tracheotomies have been known to put a lit cigarette up to their tracheotomy hole so that they can get the nicotine into their system. They don't want us to know that World War II, prisoners of war often traded food rations for tobacco, and some died of starvation in the process. Imagine trading food for cigarettes! The tobacco companies would never tell us this. They're afraid that if we knew how easy it is to get addicted and how awful it is to quit, we might not start. Then they wouldn't be able to make billions of dollars in profits every year. So the tobacco companies continue to lie to us. Even though research shows that NICOTINE IS ADDICTIVE, the tobacco industry continues to tell us that it isn't. Should we believe the tobacco industry or researchers? Should we believe the tobacco industry or people who have smoked and know how hard it is to quit? Listen to what one patient with emphysema have to say about nicotine.

**Hi, my name is Marlene. I am 49 and have 17-year old twin daughters. I started smoking when I was 18 years old.** And, right away, was a 2 to 3 pack-a-day smoker. In the last 31 years, I have quit smoking only once, and that was when I had my wisdom teeth chipped out, one week at a time. So, for 4 weeks I did not smoke. Is smoking addictive? You just bet it is. Some of you may say, "I'm young, I can smoke for a few years, and then quit." But, you can't. I thought that, but I was wrong. I've tried to stop smoking so many times that I've lost count. I have tried using the nicotine gum, the patch, the aerosol nasal spray, hypnosis, stop smoking classes, support groups, and everything under the sun. Stopping smoking is worse than dieting, stopping the use of alcohol, or biting your nails, and from what I've read, worse than stopping a drug addiction. But, nicotine is a drug, a drug that is more addictive than cocaine and heroin. When you first stop smoking, all you can think about is -- I want a cigarette... over, and over, and over, and over... You put your arms around yourself, and hug yourself tight, tears roll down your face, your hands tremble, you can't breath (ha, you can't breath anyway when you have Emphysema or chronic bronchitis--but it gets worse), and you start shaking. And you bite your tongue -- to keep from begging someone to buy you just one more pack, or get you just one more cigarette. And, after many, many, tries, and you finally succeed, you can never again have even one cigarette!!! That one cigarette will start the vicious cycle all over again. So, the best course of action is to "JUST SAY NO!" when friends hold out a cigarette for you to try. In fact, that first cigarette makes you feel pretty sick -- nauseous, light headed. But, if you get past that feeling, then you are hooked.! And, it's been proven that you're hooked almost for life. Now, there is just one more thing I want to tell you. And that's what my life is like now. I have had to quit work, because I can't breathe. And because I can't breathe, I am taking 33 pills and 5 inhalers a day. While these medicines help me, they don't cure me. THERE IS NO CURE FOR EMPHYSEMA!!! And another side

effect of these medicines and of not having enough air to breath is that my memory is gone. When my teen-age girls tell me something, I don't remember it the next day. Also, I cannot go to their school performances, award ceremonies, nor can I go clothes shopping with them, nor shopping with them for groceries. Instead of me helping them, they have to help me -- get me something to drink, water, snacks. They have to do the cleaning, dish and clothes washing, help with the cooking. OK, I can hear you. You have chores, too. But, you are not the primary person -- you are helping your parent. I hope this has helped to make you more aware. (I don't want you to get emphysema. I don't want you to get addicted.) Having Emphysema is NO picnic. Being ADDICTED is No Picnic. Thanks, for reading/listening.

Another short factual story... Tobacco companies have had testing labs and scientists working for them for years. In the 1940's a tobacco scientist had to stop a series of experiments that were intended to find out how much irritation tobacco-smoke causes a living tissue. He had to stop the experiment because "tobacco tar was the most toxic substance he had ever seen". A single drop of tobacco extract he placed on rabbits' eyes caused massive sores and complete loss of the eyes. (This would be an ideal time to show what "tar" looks like from the tar jar"

Why do you think the tobacco scientist had to give up his testing? Do you think the public learned about these 1940 experiments? Why do you think the tobacco companies hid the results?

MAKE YOUR OWN TAR JAR sample for classroom: You will need to simplify this for your students' age.

You can purchase a caulk-style tube of tar from Home Depot or other home improvement center or buy a jar of blackstrap molasses. You will need a clear jar paper plate and few Q-tips for this quick demonstration.

Find a jar that will hold at least one cup—a plastic mayo jar with a lid works well. We don't recommend glass, as you may want to pass the jar around for the students to view up close. Fill this jar almost to the top with your "tar". Put the lid on tight and show the students how thick the "tar" is as you move the jar. Now open the lid and use the Q-tip to get some of the tar and place it on the paper plate. Talk about how the "tar" sticks to things. Ask the student what they think happens when the "tar" is going into their mouth or their teeth or their throat and lungs as they smoke the cigarette.

FACT: "Tar" is one of the 40 known carcinogens (substances that cause cancer) found in tobacco products. An average smoker inhales about as much tar in one year as the student sees in your jar. Because the "tar" is very sticky it remains in the lungs of a smoker for a long time. "Tar" paralyzes the hair like structures "cilia" inside our bronchial tubes. The cilia protect the lungs by sweeping out the mucus impurities and germs that get into our lungs. When tar sticks to the cilia then we have problems.