

CALLING IT QUILTS.

How to help your teen or preteen quit smoking.

If your teenager is smoking or chewing tobacco, it will be up to him or her to quit. But you can help. Here's how:

Try and avoid threats and ultimatums. Find out why your child is smoking. Your preteen may want to be accepted by a peer group, or he or she might want your attention. Plus, adolescence alone can be stressful.

Show your interest in a non-threatening way. Ask a few questions and determine why your teen is smoking and what changes can be made in his or her life to help your child stop.

If you smoke, quit. If you did smoke and have already quit, talk to your child about your experience. Personalize the little problems around smoking and the challenge of quitting. Teens and preteens often believe they can quit smoking whenever they want—research shows many teens never do.

Your job: Be supportive. Both you and your teen will need to prepare for the mood swings and crankiness that can come with nicotine withdrawal. Offer your teen the 5 D's to get through the tough times:

- **DELAY:** The craving will eventually go away.
- **DEEP BREATH:** Take a few calming deep breaths.
- **DRINK WATER:** It will flush out the chemicals.
- **DO SOMETHING ELSE:** Find a new habit.
- **DISCUSS:** Talk about your thoughts and feelings.

Quitting for a day is easy. Quitting for life is a bit tougher. Make a list with your teen or preteen describing why they want to quit. Refer back to this list when your teen is tempted. And remember, it is best to quit cold turkey. Slowing weaning yourself from cigarettes only delays the withdrawal symptoms.

Finally, reward your teen when he or she quits. Plan something special for you to do together. Helping your child quit is one of the best parenting activities you could ever do.

the GOT A MINUTE? CAMPAIGN

Parenting can mean prevention. Those battling chronic disease at your state health department and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention struggle every day with some alarming problems. Every day, 6,000 youth try cigarettes for the first time—and one out of three smokers will die from the addiction. Preteens who report they regularly eat meals, follow a family calendar, and discuss free-time activities with their parents are less likely to smoke. And more likely to live longer, healthier lives.

Most parents don't expect their child to smoke. But youth are exposed to millions of misleading images glamorizing tobacco. That's one reason one out of eight middle school students use tobacco.

Only you know how to parent your child. We can only offer some potential ideas. But if you find a way to stay better connected with your child, you can help us with our mission... and protect a future generation against the ravages of tobacco-related disease.

GET INTO YOUR KID'S HEAD.



HERE'S HOW.

PLUS: Ways to help your teen or preteen quit smoking.



GOT A MINUTE?

GIVE IT TO YOUR KID.

Getting more involved with your preteen today will help you stay connected tomorrow. Not only that, it will help your child make better decisions—even about things like smoking, which kills one out of every three people it hooks.

We know it's not always easy. We know there's not always time. Below is some help: Ten tactics other parents have used to stay involved in their child's life.

1 Schedule time for you and your child.

Plan for it, like you might a business meeting. Write an appointment with your child on your calendar. Most importantly: Hold yourself to it. Even scheduling a short time—say, 10 minutes—can show your child he or she is important.

2 Catch your child doing something right.

We often focus on the bad things our kids do. "Catching" your child doing something right, then offering a compliment, can encourage good behavior and keep the communication lines open. This can be as easy as saying, "hey, your room looks great."

3 Prove you're listening: Ask questions.

Pretending to listen is easy. Really listening is tougher. You have to pay attention and ask follow-up questions. If you rarely listen to your child when he or she wants to talk, your child will be less likely to open up when you really want to connect.

4 Post a family calendar.

A good way to keep your family connected is to write everything down: soccer practice, hair appointments, work schedule, family outing to the park. In this way, you can better monitor your child's plans as he or she gets older and more independent. In the meantime, your child will feel more connected to you simply by knowing where you are.

5 Create rules, then enforce them.

Rules are the boundaries that every kid needs. Say yes when you can, but make no stick. Only the rules you enforce will matter. Don't set rules you do not intend to enforce. That will only create confusion.

6 Regularly share a meal with your preteen.

Not everybody has the luxury of eating a regular meal with his or her child. If you do, take advantage of it; teens who report eating meals with their family are less likely to smoke or use drugs. Even if you cannot always eat with your kids, maybe you can find a few days a week when you can. It will encourage each of you to catch up with the other. One other suggestion: Forget the television. It inhibits conversation.

7 Share your day.

Every parent has heard it: "How's your day," the parent asks the child. "Fine," the child responds. Then silence. One way to help your child open up is to share a brief story about your day first, especially if you saw something funny.

8 Write your child a thank-you note.

Some preteens say one of the reasons they know their parents care is because they get thank-you notes left at the dinner table, stuck in a book, or slipped under a pillow. You don't need to thank your child for anything really big. It can be for setting the table, helping a friend, or saying something nice.

9 Ask him for advice.

Sure, you may not consult your child about approaching your boss or refinancing your home. But there are lots of smaller issues where your child will appreciate being asked for input. What to wear to a school event or where to position the television are two examples. It shows you value their opinion, especially if you occasionally act on their advice.

10 Give your preteen family responsibilities.

Assign your preteen a chore that helps the whole family—like organizing your home recycling effort or caring for the dog. By giving your child responsibilities you are implicitly saying you trust his or her competence and are allowing them to feel more "adult"—the same benefit cigarettes falsely offer teens.