

TEEN SMOKING: GET THE FACTS.

Very few decisions you make as a teen will have as much impact on your fitness, health, appearance and wallet as your decision whether to smoke or use other tobacco products. Most teens don't decide to become tobacco users for life – they just try chewing tobacco or smoking cigarettes without realizing how easy it is to become addicted and how hard it is to quit.

At Project Love[®], we believe teens are smart enough to make good decisions for themselves if they are given the facts. In each of our quarterly Teen Wellness Newsletters, we will give you information straight from leading experts in each field on different health issues you face every day. You can use those facts to make smarter choices. As a teen, YOU are the best defender of your health. And you can be a leader in helping your friends make good choices for themselves as well.

In this newsletter, we've invited Dr. Jeffrey Wigand, one of the world's leading experts on tobacco, to share his expertise with you. Dr. Wigand was the subject of the film "The Insider" and risked his life to share the inside secrets of tobacco company practices with the public after working as a researcher for a major tobacco company for four years. You can learn more about Dr. Wigand, tobacco and health by seeing The Insider (starring Al Pacino and Russell Crowe) or by visiting www.jeffreywigand.com.

Q&A With Dr. Jeffrey Wigand

Project Love: What is a cigarette?

Jeffrey Wigand: A cigarette is a scientifically engineered drug delivery device that brings addictive nicotine to the brain in seconds. Hundreds of other toxins come along for the ride.

PL: Why should people think twice about smoking?

JW: Cigarettes rob you of your health, your good looks, your money and your autonomy. Smoking interferes with your ability to do sports. It takes your money out of your pocket every day and puts it into the pockets of highly-paid tobacco executives. And their gain in money is your loss in health. The toxins that come with the compulsive use of nicotine, cause so many diseases from heart disease to mouth, throat and respiratory illnesses to many different kinds of cancer.

PL: How do cigarettes rob you of autonomy?

JW: If you're addicted to a substance like nicotine and a behavior like smoking, it robs you of your free will. It's cruel and ironic because young people want so much to be independent and free. 90% of all smokers want to quit – it's just very hard to do.



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Founder, SMOKE-FREE KIDS, Inc.
Consultant & Activist, Tobacco-Related Issues

PL: How long does it take to become addicted?

JW: You can become addicted to nicotine after trying only one or a few cigarettes or other tobacco products. Nicotine works on the neurotransmitters of the brain to control a smoker's mood and happiness and actually changes the wiring of their brain.

PL: Give us numbers about young people and tobacco.

JW: About 3,000 children in the U.S. each day become addicted to tobacco at an average age of 12-13, even as young as 8 years old.

PL: Why would anyone ever start smoking?

JW: Big tobacco spends \$13.4 billion a year on marketing in the U.S. and \$724 million a year in Ohio alone. They want to turn you into an addict for life before you are old enough to realize you've been tricked. 90% of adult smokers today became addicted before age 18.

PL: What do tobacco companies actually think about their products?

JW: The tobacco industry believes they are in 'a covert pharmaceutical business,' that 'If we hook 'em young, we hook 'em for life,' that they are in the nicotine delivery business, and tar is the negative baggage.

PL: Is tar in cigarettes the same tar as on parking lots?

JW: Many of the chemicals in blacktop are in cigarette smoke. Those chemicals are so toxic it is actually illegal to bury them in a garbage dump. Imagine putting that in your body everyday.

PL: How does smoking change your appearance?

JW: It ages your skin, causes wrinkling around your mouth, and changes the color of your hair. The smell of smoke lingers on your breath, hair and clothes, which is a pretty unpleasant smell to people who don't smoke.

Test Your Tobacco Knowledge

Take the quiz below to see how much you know about the dangers of smoking and tobacco.

1. True or false ... Chocolate, licorice, honey as well as other ingredients/chemicals are added to tobacco products.
 True False
2. How many intentional additives are used in cigarette manufacturing?
 25 199 616 1199
3. True or false ... Light and mild cigarettes are healthier choices for smokers than regular cigarettes.
 True False
4. True or false ... Nicotine in spit or chewing tobacco is not addictive.
 True False
5. Which of the following chemicals is most addictive?
 cocaine Phenobarbital nicotine marijuana
6. True or false... Smoke inhaled directly from a cigarette is more toxic than second-hand smoke.
 True False

ANSWERS

1. True 2. 616 additives 3. False, they can be more harmful. 4. False—tobacco companies know teens become addicted to those products before they can legally buy cigarettes. 5. Nicotine 6. False, second-hand smoke contains smaller particles that go deeper into the lungs. (www.jeffreywigand.com/knowledge/test:;dhp)

Interview with Dr. Jeffrey Wigand (cont.):

PL: What do you suggest teens do if they see a friend trying a cigarette or other tobacco product?

JW: Respect their intelligence—don't be combative. Have the courage to intervene armed with kindness and the facts. Remind them that their secondhand smoke is hurting those around them including friends like you.

PL: Can smoking help you stay thin?

JW: The tobacco industry exploits girls' desire to be slim, but when you see how many overweight people also smoke, you realize that only exercise and healthy eating habits will help someone maintain a healthy weight.

PL: Is it safer to use light cigarettes?

JW: No, light cigarettes are just as addicting and contain more tar. In fact, people inhale them more deeply and more often. That's why women who smoke light cigarettes actually have higher rates of lung cancer.

PL: What goes into your lungs when you smoke or someone smokes around you?

JW: Nicotine, which goes into the brain in seconds. Tobacco smoke also contains more than 4,000 chemicals; many are potent carcinogens. Most are produced by the burning of a cigarette; some come from chemicals in the soil, the paper around the tobacco column, and the manufacturing process. Other ingredients, from honey to propylene glycol, are added.

PL: Why?

JW: To make it easier and more palatable to smoke or to enhance nicotine's potency and affect on the brain.

PL: What's bad about nicotine besides being addictive?

JW: Nicotine is a poison in itself and functions as a neurotoxin with insects and plants. In women, nicotine deactivates p53 – an oncogene (a gene that prevents lung cancer). Many other harmful effects as well.

PL: What is addiction, anyhow?

JW: 1) Knowingly using a product or behavior that has no value and causes harm;
2) The product creates 'tolerance' - you need more of the product each time to get the same satisfaction;
3) Not using the product creates 'withdrawal'. Withdrawing from tobacco may cause loss of concentration, being irritable and anxious, feeling depressed. Some people say that all the feelings that tobacco users suppress through smoking rise to the surface when they quit, making the process even harder.

PL: How many people die of tobacco-related causes in the U.S. and around the world?

JW: Annually, more than 440,000 people die in the U.S. alone. Soon, more than six million people globally will die from using tobacco each year – more than all the Jews that died in the Holocaust.

PL: Is there any safe use of tobacco?

JW: No, tobacco is the only legal product that, when used as intended, results in death.

RESOURCES - CALL TO ACTION

Start a dialogue in your school about tobacco use, the tobacco industry and quitting smoking. Here are two resources to help you start. Many more can be found at www.cdc.gov/tobacco, www.anti-smoking.org/other.htm, www.thetruth.com or www.anti-smoking.org/other.htm.

Teen Smoking: Why Do They Do It?

24 min. DVD & discussion guide produced by Project Love. Order from Aquarius Health Care Media, 888-440-2963

Secrets Through the Smoke

55 min. 3 part DVD & discussion guides produced by Dr. Wigand. Order free from the CDC at www.cdc.gov/tobacco/youth/educational_materials