



## CELEBRATE A SMOKE-FREE FATHER'S DAY

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Father's Day is a day to celebrate dads for who they are and all of the wonderful things they do. It is also a great time for dads to remember the important role they play in influencing the choices their kids make regarding tobacco use. Unfortunately, tobacco use among men remains a serious problem: one in five men currently smoke, more than 269,600 men die every year from smoking, and 216,000 kids have already lost their dad to smoking.<sup>1</sup>

Dads who smoke can celebrate Father's Day by quitting, and all dads, whether or not they smoke, can celebrate Father's Day by taking a number of effective actions to protect their kids from becoming another one of the tobacco industry's addicted customers and victims. Even if they smoke, what dads say, how they act, and the values they communicate through their words and deeds has an enormous influence whether or not kids smoke.<sup>2</sup> And all dads, smokers and nonsmokers alike, can also do a lot to protect their kids from secondhand smoke.

### How Can Dads Keep Their Children From Smoking?

As a parent, you are one of the most important persons in a child's life, especially when it comes to cigarettes. You can make a big difference in the choices your kids make.

- If you smoke, quit. If you can't quit, keep trying. Children from families who smoke are twice as likely to become smokers themselves – but parents who try to quit and talk to their kids about the how addictive smoking is, why they want to quit, and how important it is to never start can beat those odds.
- Maintain a totally smoke-free home (even if you smoke).
- Educate your child about the dangers of cigarette smoking.
  - Talk about addiction and how hard it is to quit smoking.
  - Emphasize the immediate health effects.
  - Emphasize the effects of smoking on physical appearance.
- Listen to what your child says and does about smoking and encourage your child when he/she makes good choices.
- Ask your child about his/her friends and their attitudes toward smoking. Discuss peer pressure and how to deal with it effectively.
- Clear up any misunderstandings your child might have about smoking. For example: everybody is not doing it; getting hooked can happen very quickly, and quitting is very difficult.
- Make sure your kids' schools have strong and well-enforced no-smoking rules for kids and staff.
- Support federal, state, and local tobacco-prevention efforts.<sup>3</sup>

### Children and Secondhand Smoke

A recent study found that more than 50 percent of children ages 3 through 11 have had recent exposure to cigarette smoke. The primary source of secondhand smoke exposure for children is the home, but children are also exposed to secondhand smoke in schools and other places, as well.<sup>4</sup> Children who are exposed to secondhand smoke are inhaling many of the same cancer-causing substances and poisons as smokers. That exposure increases the chances that the children will suffer from smoke-caused coughs and wheezing, bronchitis, asthma, pneumonia, potentially fatal lower respiratory tract infections, eye and ear problems, and other health problems.<sup>5</sup> Babies exposed to secondhand smoke face a higher risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) and a range of other serious health and developmental problems.<sup>6</sup>

### **How can you protect your child from secondhand smoke?**

- If you smoke, quit smoking – or at least keep trying. Call the local office of the American Lung Association or American Cancer Society, talk to your doctor, or sign up for a stop-smoking course.
- Don't let anyone smoke in your home. Make sure anyone who smokes only does so outside, away from open doors and windows. If you smoke, wear a "smoking shirt," and remove it before coming into contact with your child, especially infants – and never smoke while holding, feeding, or bathing your child. And remember: smoking residues in a home (or car) can cause harm even when smoking is no longer taking place.
- Never smoke in the car, especially when your child is a passenger.
- Avoid leaving your child with someone who smokes or in smoky environments. Ask about smoking and smoke-free rules and practices when evaluating daycare centers or babysitters, or even when leaving your kids at other people's homes. And try to make sure that your child does not take a job in restaurant or other location that allows smoking.<sup>7</sup>
- Support strong federal, state, and local smoke-free laws.

**Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, June 8, 2011**

#### **Related Campaign Factsheets**

- *Father's Day Data on Dads Smoking & Related Harms*, <http://tobaccofreekids.org/research/factsheets/pdf/0236.pdf>.
- *How Parents Can Protect Kids From Becoming Addicted Smokers*, <http://www.tobaccofreekids.org/research/factsheets/pdf/0152.pdf>

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<sup>1</sup>CDC, "Vital Signs: Cigarette Smoking Among Adults Aged ≥ 18 Years —United States, 2009," *MMWR* 59(35), September 7, 2010, <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5935a3.htm>; CDC, "Annual Smoking-Attributable Mortality, Years of Potential Life Lost, and Productivity Losses — United States, 2000-2004," *MMWR* 57(45), November 14, 2008, <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/PDF/wk/mm5745.pdf>; Leistikow, B, et al., "Estimates of Smoking-Attributable Deaths at Ages 15-54, Motherless or Fatherless Youths, and Resulting Social Security Costs in the United States in 1994," *Preventive Medicine* 30(5):353-360, May 2000, and state-specific data provided by the author.

<sup>2</sup>Newman, I, et al., "The influence of parental attitude and behavior on early adolescent cigarette smoking," *Journal of School Health* 59(4):150-2, April 1989. See, also, Distefan, J, et al., "Parental influences predict adolescent smoking in the United States, 1989-1993," *Journal of Adolescent Health* 22:466-74, 1998.

<sup>3</sup> For more detail and cites to sources, see the TFK factsheet, *How Parents Can Protect Kids From Becoming Addicted Smokers*, <http://www.tobaccofreekids.org/research/factsheets/pdf/0152.pdf>.

<sup>4</sup> U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), "Nonsmokers' Exposure to Secondhand Smoke in the United States, 199-2008," *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR)* 59(35), September 10, 2010. <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/pdf/wk/mm5935.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> The Health Consequences of Involuntary Exposure to Tobacco Smoke: A Report of the Surgeon General, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Children are Hurt by Secondhand Smoke, <http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/secondhandsmoke/factsheets/factsheet2.html>.

<sup>6</sup> The Health Consequences of Involuntary Exposure to Tobacco Smoke: A Report of the Surgeon General, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Children are Hurt by Secondhand Smoke, <http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/secondhandsmoke/factsheets/factsheet2.html>; The Health Consequences of Involuntary Exposure to Tobacco Smoke: A Report of the Surgeon General, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, How to Protect Yourself and Your Loved Ones from Secondhand Smoke - <http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/secondhandsmoke/factsheets/factsheet3.html>.

<sup>7</sup> TFK factsheet, *How Parents Can Protect Kids from Becoming Addicted Smokers*, <http://www.tobaccofreekids.org/research/factsheets/pdf/0152.pdf>.