

## SAD Facts

*Make Informed Decisions! It's your life!*

**S**moking  
**A**lcohol  
**D**rugs

### **Smoking and Nicotine: Consider the Facts!**

Smoking is an addictive habit. The tobacco in cigarettes contains a drug called nicotine. Nicotine is addictive. Smoking is a very difficult habit to break.

How do we become addicted? Nicotine in tobacco gives us a lift. Some people say it keeps them from eating. Or it helps them stay awake and feels good. Once your body gets used to nicotine it starts needing more. It will need more and more to get the same feeling. Most teenagers say they started smoking because they were talked into it by a friend. Some start smoking because they want to be part of a group. Many teens start smoking to feel older or different.



Smoking damages many parts of the body. It can damage the lining of the nose, throat and lungs. Even tobacco companies have admitted that smoking is bad for our health. There is now proof that smoking is linked to many cancers. This is cancer of the lung, mouth, esophagus, stomach, kidney, liver, pancreas, uterus, cervix and bladder. In fact, smoking causes 85% of the lung cancer in the U.S. Smoking is also related to other diseases, such as stroke and heart attack.

New research shows that breathing second-hand smoke is bad for our health. Many public places have banned smoking because second-hand smoke is dangerous. Over 3,000 non-smokers die each year because of second-hand smoke. Chewing tobacco is also addictive and bad for our health. This can cause cancer of the mouth and throat.

Smoking e-cigarettes and vaping are not without their health risks. They have many of the same nicotine-related effects on health as smoking cigarettes. In the US, it is illegal for anyone under the age of 21 to purchase cigarettes and related products.

Death from smoking can be prevented. Most people get hooked on cigarettes as teenagers. This is why tobacco companies want teens to start smoking early. They become lifelong cigarette users.

If you smoke, your chances of dying from cancer are twice as high as a non-smoker. What will you decide?

## SAD Facts

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## Smoking Alcohol Drugs

### **A**lcohol and drinking: Consider the Facts!

Alcohol is a legal, addictive drug. Alcohol causes death through illness and traffic accidents. Alcohol causes more traffic accidents than anything else. In fact, a group called MADD, Mothers Against Drunk Drivers, was started to teach people about the dangers of drinking and driving. This education is really important for teenage drivers. Young drivers cause more car accidents from drinking than any other age group.

Heavy drinking for a long time will cause many health problems. These include birth defects, liver and heart problems, and overall poor health. Too much alcohol or mixing it with other drugs can cause immediate death. Car accidents and illness are just a part of the problem. It also causes emotional problems for families over a period of time.

Alcohol dulls the senses and the emotions. It dulls the feelings when people are low or depressed. It also dulls feelings when people are happy. Teenagers drink to dull their feelings. They don't want to be different from everyone else. They want to be accepted by others. By drinking, teens feel more relaxed. They put off dealing with their bad feelings. By putting off their feelings, they don't grow and mature. The longer a teenager puts off growing up, the harder it is to become a responsible, happy adult.



Addiction to alcohol is called alcoholism. Recovering from alcoholism is very hard. Once an alcoholic, always an alcoholic. Alcoholics must fight the addiction for the rest of their lives. The best way to get control over alcohol is with AA or Alcoholics Anonymous. This is a support group that helps people learn new habits to stop drinking. Family members of alcoholics have support groups, too. Family members are also affected by alcoholism. They often acquire the habits and traits of the alcoholic relative.

Drinking can be risky. It can cause accidents or illness. Once addicted always addicted.

## SAD Facts

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## Smoking Alcohol Drugs

### Drugs: Consider the Facts!

It is very easy to become addicted to most drugs. Some drugs may cause a mental dependence, such as marijuana.\* Others cause a physical addiction, such as amphetamines or heroin. Addiction to illegal drugs causes many problems. These problems are illness, death and the break up of families. It is very difficult to stop using drugs once addicted. A large amount of crime is caused by drug use. Many people are in prison because they used or sold drugs to others.

Most drugs will dull the senses and make people feel high. Drugs dull feelings and stop growth. Doing drugs stops young people from maturing. People get high instead of facing the experiences of life. Doing drugs brings about poor relationships with others.

Like drinking alcohol, teenagers take drugs to dull their feelings. They don't want to feel different from everyone else. They think drugs will help them feel accepted. By doing drugs, teens put off dealing with their unsure feelings. Once they stop their personal growth, it's harder to grow into a responsible, happy adult.

Recovering from drug addiction is very difficult. There are programs in most cities that help people stop using drugs. They learn new habits to stay off of drugs. Those addicted to drugs must fight it for the rest of their lives.

To get control over drugs, they can join groups like NA - Narcotics Anonymous. This is a support group. It helps drug users learn new habits to stop using drugs. There are also support groups for families of drug users. Family members are also affected by the drug user. They can acquire the habits and traits of the drug user with whom they live

Drugs destroy relationships, families and lives.

\*Although marijuana is now legal in many states, nowhere in the U.S. is it legal for children younger than 21 to use marijuana.



## Find the Facts

**S**moking  
**A**lcohol  
**D**rugs

1. Of the three unhealthy habits, smoking, drinking alcohol, or taking drugs, which is most harmful to your body? Why?
2. Of the three unhealthy habits, smoking, drinking alcohol, or taking drugs, which is most addictive? Why?
3. Why is smoking considered the number one cause of preventable death in the United States?
4. What similarities do the three unhealthy habits have?
5. Which is the worst habit to have of the three? Why?
6. What is the best way to prevent someone from starting any of the three habits?
7. What advice would you offer someone who wanted to quit drinking alcohol or doing drugs?