

Talk to your kids about not smoking

They'll Listen

"Parents are the single most important influence on children's decision to smoke, drink or use drugs, yet many parents do not fully understand the extent of their influence."

(THE NATIONAL CENTER ON ADDICTION AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE AT COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY. MALIGNANT NEGLECT: SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND AMERICA'S SCHOOLS. 2001)

You know your child better than anyone, so you're in a great position to know which messages about not smoking may make the biggest impression. Here are some reminders of points you may want to make about smoking. Of course, you'll want to talk about these subjects in your own words, geared to your child's level of understanding.

- **State your own values clearly.**

Younger children may respond well to simple rules, such as "In this family we don't smoke. I don't want you to smoke and will be disappointed if you do." As your child grows older, she may be more concerned with fitting in with her peers. But she's still listening closely to what you have to say--even if it doesn't feel that way at times!

- **Focus on short-term consequences.**

As adults, we know that smoking leads to life-threatening illnesses such as heart disease, emphysema and lung cancer. But most teenagers don't worry about long-term risks. They can't imagine what it's like to be older or to be sick. You'll catch their attention better if you focus on the immediate consequences of smoking--things such as bad breath, smelly clothes, yellow teeth or poor performance in sports. You might also point out that teens who smoke cigarettes could get addicted quickly.

- **Run a reality check. Preteens and teens** tend to overestimate the number of children their age and older who engage in all sorts of risky behaviors, including smoking, using drugs and drinking alcohol. Make sure your child knows that the large majority of high schools students don't smoke.

- **Talk about peer pressure.** Acknowledge some of the tough situations your

child may face, and suggest positive ways of dealing with them. Remember, too, that positive peer pressure can help keep her away from tobacco, alcohol and other drugs. Point out classmates and friends she admires who don't engage in these behaviors.

- **Show them the money!** Kids are proud of what they can do with the money they earn. Figure out together how much it would cost each year to smoke and how many hours it would take, at typical teen wages, to earn that. Then talk about what else they might do with that money.

- **Set the rules.** Tell your child the consequences for smoking in your family, and make sure you follow through on them.

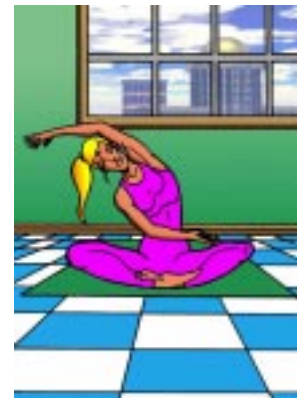
If your child already smokes--find out if they are addicted, and if so, treat the addiction as a medical not a disciplinary problem. Discuss methods of quitting. Support their efforts to quit.

--PHILIP MORRIS USA, 2003

Take a moment for your health

Exercise the prevention of breast cancer

The best thing you can do to prevent breast cancer is all around you. It's right outside your door. It may even be in your closet, or under your bed, or in that room you don't seem to make it into as much these days. In fact it's right under your nose, and you probably don't even know. What is it? Exercise! That answer may sound simple, but it really can be the difference maker for your health. Recent studies have concluded that exercise is the best thing women of all ages can do to reduce their risk for breast cancer.



It's time to grab those walking shoes out of the closet, dust off that exercise equipment and get moving to prevent cancer. The most notable study, which looked at 74,000 women, shows that it is never too late to start. Those who participated in moderate exercise (walking, cycling or swimming) five times a week reduced their risk of developing breast cancer by 20%. This includes even those with a family history of breast cancer and those taking hormone replacement therapy. You don't have to be a body builder or a marathon runner to reap the health benefits of exercise. Moderate to light routines will help most. Staying committed is the key. Always remember to consult your physician and start off slowly. Exercising on most days means light to moderate activity for thirty minutes or more, 4-5 days a week. The theory being this study is that exercise lowers body fats, which lowers the levels of cancer-causing hormones circulating in the body. This study is significant because it empowers women to know what they can do to reduce their risk for one of the most feared health issues. The great news is the same exercise routine will help you prevent a number of other health issues, like heart disease, the number one killer for both men and women.

--Provided by the Queen of the Valley Hospital Foundation.

High Protein - Low Carbohydrate Diets

Q. How do these diets work?

A. By restricting carbohydrates drastically to a mere fraction of that found in the typical American diet, the body goes into a different metabolic state called *ketosis*, whereby it burns its own fat for fuel. Normally the body burns carbohydrates for fuel--this is the main source of fuel for your brain, heart and many other organs. A person in ketosis is getting energy from *ketones*, little carbon fragments that are the fuel created by the breakdown of fat stores. When the body is in ketosis, you tend to feel less hungry, and thus you're likely to eat less than you might otherwise. However, ketosis can also cause health problems, such as kidney failure.

As a result, your body changes from a carbohydrate-burning engine into a fat-burning engine. So instead of relying on the carbohydrate-rich items you might typically consume for energy, and leaving your fat stores just where they were before (alas, the hips, belly, and thighs), your fat stores become a primary energy source. The purported result. Weight loss.

Q. Is this diet right for me?

A. These theories of weight loss remain unproven, and most experts are concerned that high protein, low carb diets can cause a host of problems, particularly for the large segment of the population that is at risk for heart disease. What's more, the plan doesn't permit a high intake of fruits and vegetables, recommended by most nutrition experts because of the numerous documented health benefits from these foods. The experts say to achieve permanent weight loss you must change your life-style. This means following a lower calorie diet that includes grains, legumes, fruits and vegetables combined with participating in regular physical activity.

Before starting this or any diet, be sure to talk with your doctor to determine what approach is right for you.

--THE CLEVELAND CLINIC

Leaving Home for College

Leaving home is a further loosening of child-parent ties. Many young people feel pressure to distance themselves from their parents. I feel that parents and adolescents need not be afraid of close child-parent bonding. Their close emotional ties will not tie them to their mother's apron strings.

In fact, healthy parental bonding helps adolescents to become independent and autonomous smoothly. The first year of college should be taken as a transitional period for separation rather than an abrupt ending of all contact with home.

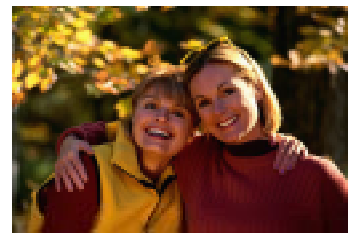
In the first years of college, interdependence with parents and siblings is psychologically healthy and helps the young adults to become more mature, loving and self-confident.

A study of undergraduate freshmen show that, overall, students feel closer to their families after they leave home and these closer ties promote greater independence and self responsibility. Students who have a secure base at home are more likely to form friendships, make good grades, and feel more satisfied with life in college. When they make phone calls or come home on vacations,, they are more likely to express their affection to the family members and communicate in an open and honest manner about how well they are doing at college.

When stressed out, or they have a problem or an important decision to make, they look to their parents for support and consultation. These behaviors do not endanger their autonomy and independence.

Harmonious relationship with parents leads to a feeling of psychological well-being in students. They believe that their parents want them to be independent and at the same time, they feel assured that their parents will be available if they need help.

Allow them space and time to prepare for and adjust to the requirements of the new life and new environments. It is a time of joy and sadness for parents. Your "child" is stepping out of your home into the outside world. Do not be impatient and attempt to solve their problems or give unsolicited advice.



One of the most helpful things I know that parents can tell their adolescents at the time of saying good-bye, is something to the effect, "Take good care of yourself, even better care than we took of you."

Offer to accompany your adolescent for the first trip to college for orientation, provided he or she wants you to. If you are a student who is going to college, I want to tell you that it is OK to still feel attached to your family. It is OK to be thinking about home when you are away from home and to seek out your parents when you feel stressed out or overwhelmed.

The fact is that, at least in the beginning, emotionally healthy and well adjusted students keep regular contact with their families and draw emotional support and security from them.



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--VIP. SHARMA, PH.D.,
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