



LAKE COUNTY NARCOTICS AGENCY

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Parent's Guide Week #2 Tobacco

For the next 3 lessons we will be talking about drugs. The biggest question brought up by the students is "If alcohol and tobacco are dangerous, why are they legal for adults to use?" The P.L.U.S. Officer explains that laws are made to protect people. The laws sending this *double message* about tobacco and alcohol were passed long before science knew how deadly and dangerous these drugs really are. The laws about these drugs are slowly changing, but legal or illegal, we explain to the students they can always make the choice to stay safe, keep their body healthy, and choose not to use. That is the *POWER of ONE*.

This week's lesson is on TOBACCO: The most addictive drug in tobacco is Nicotine. Nicotine is an extremely addictive drug; addicting 82% of the young people who smoke or use spit tobacco. A recent study shows that the tobacco companies have increased their nicotine content in cigarettes ranging from 10% to 18% between 1998 and 2008. There is another chemical in tobacco called *Benzopyrene* (*benz(a)pyrene*). Benzopyrene causes a genetic mutation in the cells of the lungs. This genetic mutation suppresses the growth of healthy cells in the lungs, and the rest of the body. Benzopyrene is related to at least 70% of all lung cancers, and 50% of other types of cancers. There are a total of 69 cancer-causing chemicals in every cigarette smoked. A young person who is smoking as little as a cigarette a day can become addicted within 3 weeks. Once addicted, less than 4% of adults can stop smoking for life. Over the last several years the average age of first puff has maintained a level of 10 years old. What is it that draws our youth to tobacco at such a young age.....

Another issue we discuss with the students is Second-hand Smoke. This is the smoke that comes from the lit cigarette and the smoke blown out by the smoker. Second-hand smoke is toxic. Second-hand smoke also contains benzopyrene. A young person who grows up in a home with one or more adults in that home, who smoke, has a 21 times greater chance of developing cancer by the age of 35 than a person who grows up in a smoke-free home. We talk to the children about protecting themselves from second-hand smoke, and we ask them to talk to you about ways to do just that. We also explain that parents care about and love their children and would not do anything to harm them. Therefore, if parents are smoking around children it is because they (the adult) do not know how dangerous second-hand smoke is to others. This is a tough issue for kids because they do not have the authority to make an adult smoke somewhere away from them. Please understand, we are not asking you (adults) to stop smoking, but please take some time and speak with your children about what they can do to stay away from second-hand smoke.

We also talk about the current "Youth Possession" Tobacco law, ORC 2151.87, which was put into law on March 15, 2001. This law states: "it is **ILLEGAL** for individuals under 18 to attempt to or to purchase, possess, use, or order cigarettes, other tobacco products or papers used to roll cigarettes. (Children attempting to purchase tobacco products as part of a compliance check are exempt.)"

If a juvenile court finds that a child violated these provisions, the court may do either or both of the following:

- Require the child to attend a youth smoking education program or other smoking treatment program approved by the court, if one is available.

and/or

- Impose a fine of not more than one hundred dollars.

If a child disobeys a juvenile court order issued under this law, the court may do any or all of the following:

- Increase the fine imposed.

- Require the child to perform not more than 20 hours of community service.

- Suspend for 30 days the temporary instruction permit, probationary permit or driver's license issued to that child.

Local legislative bodies may still implement their own, more stringent youth possession laws, however this law will preempt them if they are less stringent in their enforcement and penalties.

Police officers are responsible for enforcement.

We explain that the choice to use tobacco by adults of legal age is permitted in our society. We ask the children to go home and talk with you, the parents, about your feelings and beliefs related to your child's use or non-use of the drug tobacco. It is important for you, *being the most important person in your child's life*, to explain and talk about your opinions, expectations, rules and decisions regarding use of legal drugs like tobacco. *Your expectations and rules regarding your child's use and non-use of any drug is the most protective factor your child can have in helping him/her stay drug free.*

Student/Parent Homework (Week 2):

Discuss with your child what you see as the dangers of tobacco use. Whether you smoke or not, talk with your child about your views regarding his/her use of tobacco. If you are a smoker (or an ex-smoker) talk to your child about the cost of smoking and possibly your desire or wish to no longer smoke. Your child needs to have these discussions with you as part of completing the homework assignment. Please take time to review what your child has written and sign the homework sheet.

Did you know?

- Of the roughly 750,000 kids who become *new, regular, daily smokers* each year, almost a third will ultimately die from it.
- A *non-smoker* riding in a car with a smoker for 1 hour will inhale 4 cigarettes worth of smoke.
- On average smokers lose 13 to 14 years of life because they smoke.
- Healthcare Costs: Total annual public and private health care expenditures caused by smoking is over \$96.7 billion dollars.
- Non-Healthcare Costs: Productivity losses caused by smoking each year is over \$97.6 billion dollars.
- Residential and commercial property losses from smoking-caused fires are approximately \$500 million each year.

The tobacco industry in the USA annually spends \$13.4 billion (**\$36+ million per day**) on advertising.