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# Facts on Youth Smoking, Health, and Performance



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### **Facts on Youth Smoking, Health, and Performance**

What it does to your lungs

Among young people, the short-term health effects of smoking include damage to the respiratory system, addiction to nicotine, and the associated risk of other drug use. Long-term health consequences of youth smoking are reinforced by the fact that most young people who smoke regularly continue to smoke throughout adulthood. (CDC. Preventing tobacco use among young people---A report of the Surgeon General. 1994, p. 15)

Smoking among youth can hamper the rate of lung growth and the level of maximum lung function. (CDC. Preventing tobacco use among young people, p. 17)

#### **What it does to your athletic ability**

Smoking hurts young people's physical fitness in terms of both performance and endurance---even among young people trained in competitive running. (CDC. Preventing tobacco use among young people, p. 28)

#### **What it does to your heartbeat**

The resting heart rates of young adult smokers are two to three beats per minute faster than those of nonsmokers. (CDC. Preventing tobacco use among young people, p. 28)

Among young people, regular smoking is responsible for cough and increased frequency and severity of respiratory illnesses. (CDC. Preventing tobacco use among young people, p. 9)

#### **Addiction to nicotine**

The younger people start smoking cigarettes, the more likely they are to become strongly addicted to nicotine. (CDC. Preventing tobacco use among young people, p. 9)

#### **The connection to alcohol, sex and violence**

Teens who smoke are three times more likely than nonsmokers to use alcohol, eight times more likely to use marijuana, and 22 times more likely to use cocaine. Smoking is associated with a host of other risky behaviors, such as fighting and engaging in unprotected sex. (CDC. Preventing tobacco use among young people, p. 36,104)

#### **What it does to your health in general, and your mind too**

Smoking is associated with poor overall health and a variety of short-term adverse health effects in young people and may also be a marker for underlying mental health problems, such as depression, among adolescents. High school seniors who are regular smokers and began smoking by grade nine are 2.4 times more likely than their nonsmoking peers to report poorer overall health 2.4 to 2.7 times more likely to report cough with phlegm or blood, shortness of breath when not exercising, and wheezing or gasping 3.0 times more likely to have seen a doctor or other health professional for an emotional or psychological complaint.