

So You Think It's Cool to Smoke?

So you think it's cool to smoke? Yeah, so did I. Here are a few of the things I used to tell myself when I first started to smoke.

A few cigarettes won't hurt me.

With each puff, you inhale thousands of poisonous chemicals. Your heart beats faster and your blood pressure goes up. Your throat, nose and eyes burn—especially when you first start smoking. You may cough and become short of breath. The nicotine in cigarettes can cause you to feel sick to your stomach and dizzy. Carbon monoxide replaces the oxygen in your blood which decreases your ability to play sports.

You won't cough or feel sick every time you smoke. Your body will get used to it. But the damage to your body increases each time you smoke.

I'll stop when I want to.

Starting to smoke is easy. Quitting is tough. Seven of ten teen smokers say they wish they'd never started. Approximately 75% of teen smokers have tried seriously at least once to stop smoking and failed. The younger you are when you start, the harder it will be to stop when you're older. The younger you start, the greater your risk of disease.

It only takes a short time to become addicted to nicotine. You'll know you're addicted when you start craving cigarettes and feeling nervous without them. You'll really know you're addicted when you try to stop and you can't.

Smoking makes me look glamorous.

Smoking makes your teeth yellow and gives you bad breath. Smoking makes your clothes and hair stink. Smoking makes your skin wrinkle sooner. Not exactly a glamorous picture.

Smoking makes me sexy.

According to an American Cancer Society survey, 78% of boys ages 12 to 17 said they don't want to date someone who smokes. Sixty-nine percent (69%) of girls prefer to date a nonsmoker. In fact, a lot of people don't want to be around smokers.

Smoking really relaxes me.

It may feel like it, but nicotine is actually a stimulant. It speeds up your bodily functions and increases your heart rate.

Smoking keeps me thin. I'll gain weight if I stop.

Smoking doesn't keep you slim. Smoking occupies your hands so you don't eat. The small amount of weight you may gain when you stop smoking is much less harmful than smoking and can be minimized with exercise.

And finally...

All my friends smoke.

If all your friends jumped off a bridge, would you?