

Dear Families,

Welcome to “Get Smart About Tobacco,” a grades 3–5 educational program developed by the CVS Health Foundation in collaboration with Scholastic Inc. to build student classroom skills, teach about the dangers of tobacco, and encourage discussions between you and your child.

You may think it’s too early to talk with your child about tobacco. But a recent national survey showed that five percent of eighth graders had already tried their first cigarette by the end of fifth grade. Another study suggests that teaching elementary-school kids about the dangers of tobacco can decrease smoking rates in later years. That’s important because studies have shown that people who begin smoking earlier are more likely to develop a severe addiction to nicotine.

The good news is that fewer youths and adults are smoking today. But the use of products such as electronic cigarettes, which contain the same addictive chemical—nicotine—as real cigarettes, is on the rise in middle and high school students.

It can be difficult to talk to your children about tobacco, especially if you use it yourself. Think carefully about what to say. Share lessons that you have learned from your experiences, such as how difficult it can be to quit. Make it clear that you don’t want your children to smoke.

We hope that you will use the tips and resources in this guide to create a safe, tobacco-free environment for your children.

Sincerely,

Ann Amstutz Hayes
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Teaching the next generation how to live tobacco-free



CREATE A HEALTHY HOME

Kids who grow up in a smoke-free home are healthier and less likely to become smokers themselves. Here are some tips to help you create a healthy, tobacco-free home:

- ➔ Insist on a smoke-free home. Don’t smoke, and don’t let others smoke inside your home.
- ➔ Visit family-friendly restaurants and areas that are smoke-free. Even if no one is currently smoking, chemicals can remain on surfaces days after smoking occurred.
- ➔ Ensure that places where your children spend time—such as at a day care or a friend’s or relative’s house—are smoke-free.
- ➔ Encourage a healthy lifestyle in your home. As a family, set health goals each week and write them down where you all can see them. For example, pledge to eat healthy greens at every dinner, take a long walk on the weekend, or drink enough water each day.

SOURCES: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: *MMWR*: (2015) “Tobacco Use Among Middle and High School Students—United States, 2011–2014”; (2014) “Smoking and Youth”; (2013) “Youth Risk Behavior Survey”; (2012) “Protecting Your Children from Tobacco Use.” Gilman, et al., *Pediatrics*: (2009) “Parental Smoking and Adolescent Smoking Initiation: An Intergenerational Perspective on Tobacco Control.” Goniewicz, et al., *Tobacco Control*: (2014) “Levels of Selected Carcinogens and Toxicants in Vapour from Electronic Cigarettes.” Jamal, et al., *MMWR*: (2014) “Current Cigarette Smoking Among Adults—United States, 2005–2013.” Johnston, et al.: (2014) “Monitoring the Future National Survey Results on Drug Use, 1975–2013—Vol. 1, Secondary School Students.” Matt, et al., *Environ Health Perspect*: (2011) “Thirdhand Tobacco Smoke: Emerging Evidence and Arguments for a Multidisciplinary Research Agenda.” National Center for Health Statistics: (1965–2011) “National Health Interview Survey.” U.S. Department of Health and Human Services: (2014) “The Health Consequences of Smoking—50 Years of Progress: A Report of the Surgeon General”; (2010) “A Report of the Surgeon General: How Tobacco Smoke Causes Disease: The Biology and Behavioral Basis for Smoking-Attributable Disease”; (2006) “The Health Consequences of Involuntary Exposure to Tobacco Smoke: A Report of the Surgeon General.”

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