

HeartSmart Teachable Moments

The Air We Breathe

Grades 4 – 6



The Air We Breathe - The Costs of Smoking

Summary

Students will:

- Identify the cost of cigarettes and compare it with the cost of other items
- Calculate the cost savings of not smoking for a year
- Discuss how their spending choices might affect their health
- Discuss reasons young people smoke

Objectives

- Students will understand that smoking is harmful to their health and is also a costly habit monetarily
- Students will be able to calculate and compare the savings from not smoking

Key Words

cost, allowance, alternative, health impacts, monetary, annual

Preparation

- Find the current price of a pack of cigarettes in your community
- Prepare for alternate cost inquiries such as e-cigarette refills, chewing tobacco, flavoured cigarillos, etc.

Potential Materials

- Calculator, colouring and drawing materials, old magazines or flyers
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Main Steps

Choose activities from the following steps to customize your lesson to the needs of your class.

THE COSTS OF SMOKING

Smoking is Bad for Your Health

Begin by asking students to predict what are some of the negative impacts on health from breathing in tobacco smoke. Record the student's answers on a board or large piece of chart paper. Some of their answers may include:

- Chronic diseases such as heart disease or cancer
- Stained teeth and skin
- Difficulty breathing during endurance activities
- Smelling bad

Distribute the activity sheet "*Tobacco Tid-Bits*" and review some of the negative health impacts listed.

Ask students to think of some reasons why young people start to smoke and write their suggestions on the board. Then ask them to list counter-arguments to the reasons listed. If necessary, prompt students with questions such as:

- What reasons might come from the way the smoker feels? *Smoking makes you feel more adult; lets you show others you don't care what they say, etc.*

Smoking is Expensive

Ask the class if anyone knows how much a package of cigarettes costs and write the correct answer on the board. Have the class name other items that cost about the same amount, including healthy items such as community centre passes. Write them on the board and point out that every package of cigarettes means not buying one of the other items.

Distribute the activity sheets "*Costly Habits*."

The Air We Breathe - The Costs of Smoking

Have the class brainstorm more items that someone could choose over the high cost of cigarettes. Also have them record the cost of smoking to one's health.

Discuss with the class how their choices might contribute to or detract from their own health. If necessary, prompt students with questions such as the following:

- What is the health cost of spending money on tobacco products? *In addition to the financial cost, tobacco products cause harm to the heart and circulatory system, lungs and other parts of the body.*
- What are the health costs or benefits of the alternative choices? *Some choices, such as junk foods or other harmful substances, may also have health costs. Spending on items such as sports equipment and healthy meals may contribute to good health.*
- How could governments use the price of tobacco products to prevent smoking? *E.g.: Raise taxes or price of cigarettes to make it more expensive to smoke.*

Have students draw or make a collage on the activity sheet illustrating items they could buy with the money saved by not smoking

Re-visit the cost of cigarettes and have students calculate the annual costs of smoking one cigarette a day, half a pack a day and one pack a day. Ask the students to work out the calculations and record them on the activity sheet. Compare the large annual costs of smoking to higher priced items like kayaking, elite bicycles, annual passes, etc.

Wrap-up/Assessment

Have students present to the class their drawing or collage showing what they would choose to buy with money saved by not smoking for a year.

Students should be able to:

- Calculate the costs of smoking monetarily and impacts on one's health.
- Compare the savings to the price of other items.

Extensions

- Have students make school display using graphs and illustrations to compare the cost of smoking with the cost of alternative items.
- Have students research the health costs to society caused by smoking. Then have students debate whether tobacco companies should be liable for the health costs caused by smoking.
- Have students use a graphing program to calculate and graph the cost of smoking various numbers of cigarettes from the age of 16 to the age of 76. Have them calculate what they could buy if they did not spend the money on cigarettes.
- Give examples of what the calculated savings could do to support animals, children, and others who are in need of support.
- Research animations on the health impacts of smoking over time on one's health.

Your Health

- Tobacco smoke carries 4,000 chemicals like nicotine and tar into a smoker's lungs. Over 60 of these can cause cancer.
- Nicotine makes your heart beat faster, and that can harm it.
- Nicotine can lead to clogged blood vessels. That makes the heart work harder to move the blood through the body. It can cause a heart attack or stroke.

Other People's Smoke

The smoke from other people's cigarettes smells bad, but that's not all - it can harm your lungs and heart.

- Second-hand smoke is the smoke that smoker's exhale. Some of the harmful substances stay in the lungs, but most goes back in into the air, where others can breathe it.
- Sidestream smoke comes off the lit end of a cigarette. It may be the most dangerous, because it is not filtered.

Together, they are called environmental tobacco smoke. This kind of air pollution causes one-third of lung cancers. Smokers say they can make up their own mind if they want to smoke, but they force everyone around them to smoke, too.



Good Reasons to Live Smoke-Free

Most people don't smoke, and most smokers want to quit. Here's why people want to live smoke-free:

- No smoker's breath.
- No upset stomach from tobacco.
- No nicotine stains on teeth and fingers.
- Don't lose your breath in games and sports.
- Not sick as often.

- Have a healthier heart, blood vessels and lungs.
- Avoid the risk of fires caused by smoking.
- Save the money spent on tobacco.
- Don't have to leave public places to smoke.

• WHAT ARE OTHER REASONS?

Costly Habits



Smoking can be a costly habit. Let's see how much money can be saved by not smoking and what healthy things we could do with it.



Research how much a pack of cigarettes costs:

What are some other healthy items, like swimming passes or a healthy meal, that you could do with that money?

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Keep in mind that there are many health costs and not just financial costs you save by avoiding tobacco smoke!

What are they?

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Let's do the math!

Say that a pack of cigarettes cost \$12 and a full pack is 20 cigarettes.

| Cost of One Pack of Cigarettes | Annual Cost of One Cigarette a Day | Annual Cost of One Half Pack a Day | Annual Cost of One Pack a Day |
|--------------------------------|--|--|---|
| \$12 | $\$12/20 \text{ cigarettes} \times 365 \text{ days} = \219 | $\$12/2 \text{ (half pack)} \times 365 \text{ days} = \$2,190$ | $\$12 \times 1 \text{ (full pack)} \times 365 \text{ days} = \$4,380$ |

Now you try with different costs and quantities:

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Draw or make a collage of all the things you could **buy with the money that would be saved.**

