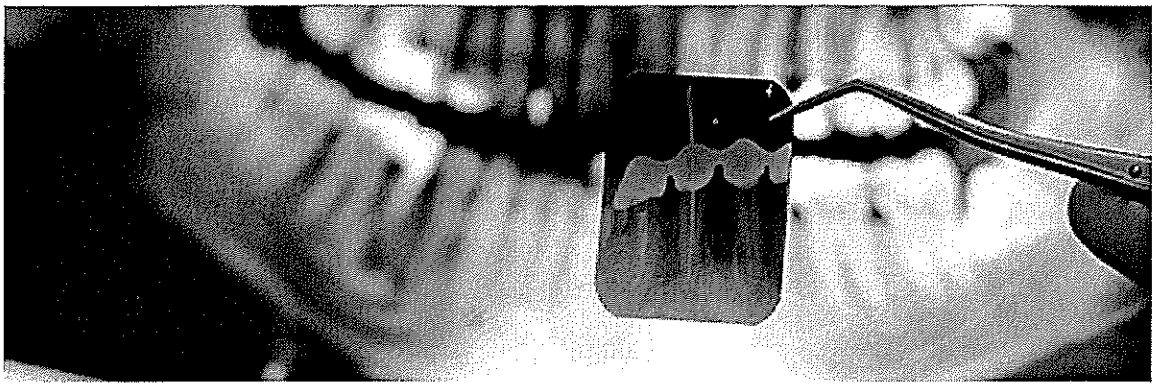
THE REAL COST

HEALTH COSTS

HERE AND NOW



Smoking may stain your teeth[1] and turn your fingers yellow. It can also harm your skin by destroying its elastic fibers and weakening its ability to repair itself.[2] [3] [4] This can lead to wrinkles and other signs of premature aging — we've all seen it before, but it can come on a lot faster when you smoke.[5] [6]

Smoking also causes inflammation and cell damage throughout the body, and can weaken your immune system, making it less efficient at fighting off disease.[7] As a result, smokers have more lung infections than nonsmokers.[8] They are also more likely to have a serious gum infection that can lead to tooth loss.[9]

Oh, by the way, you don't have to be a long-time smoker to have an asthma attack that is triggered by tobacco smoke.[10]

UNDER ATTACK

Every time you smoke, your body is under attack. Your lungs become inflamed and damaged.[11] Your body recognizes this, and your immune system kicks into high gear to repair the damage.[12] When you keep smoking, it's like spilling an irritant on your skin — if you did this many times a day, your skin would not have a chance to heal. It would stay red, irritated and inflamed.

The organs in your body also have a lining of cells similar to skin. Chemicals in cigarette smoke can inflame and damage these cells and when you keep smoking, the damage cannot heal. Making your immune system work overtime can leave you vulnerable to disease in almost every part of your body.[13]

CATCH YOUR BREATH

So smoking is bad for your lungs, no surprise there. What might surprise you is how bad it is for lungs that are still developing. If you're under 20, your lungs are still growing, and

smoking can stunt that growth.[14] We're not talking about just being short of breath now — teens who smoke may end up as adults with lungs that never grow to their potential or perform at full capacity.[15] Such damage is permanent and increases the risk of chronic bronchitis and emphysema.[16]

OVER TIME

Even young adults under age 30 who started smoking in their teens and early twenties can develop smoking-related health problems,[17] such as:

- Smaller lungs that don't function properly
- Wheezing that can lead to being diagnosed with asthma
- DNA damage that can cause cancer almost anywhere in the body
- Early cardiovascular disease (e.g., heart attacks and stroke)

Smoking longer means more damage. Scientists now know that your disease risk surges even higher after you have smoked for about 20 years.[18] Because of nicotine addiction, smokers often have difficulty quitting and continue smoking for many years. Those who smoke throughout their lives get sicker and die an average of 13 years younger than nonsmokers. Did you know that smoking is the leading cause of preventable deaths in the U.S.?[19] [20] Every day, more than 1,300 people in this country die from smoking-related causes — and almost all of them started before age 18.[21] [22] This accounts for 1 out of 5 deaths.[23] [24]

Quitting isn't easy but it can be done and will benefit your health at any age. The sooner you quit, the sooner your body will begin to heal. In fact, research shows that if you quit when you are still young, your health could become almost as good as a nonsmoker's.[25]

Name: _____ Period: _____

After reading the "Health Costs" article answer the following:

List 2 pieces of information you already knew:

1.

2.

List 4 pieces of new information that you learned from reading the article today:

1.

2.

3.

4.

In terms of monetary costs, if cigarettes cost $5.00/pack (on average for Indiana) and a person smokes:

1 pack/week how much would they spend:

a week: _____

a month: _____ Use 4 wks in a month

a year: _____ Use # of months in a year to calculate

1 pack/day how much would they spend:

a week: _____

a month: _____ Use 30 days/month

a year: _____ Use 365 days in a year to calculate

(use the average of 30 days/month and 365 days/year to calculate your answer)