

Saving the Next Generation: Why Schools Must Teach the Dangers of Smoking

60% of children who smoke start by the age of 14. Let that sink in. 60%. That would be 200 million children today, smoking. They are destroying their future with tobacco, nicotine, and carbon monoxide. They are giving up their health for bursts of dopamine, approval, adrenaline... and it all starts with teenagers.

Hello, my name is Elaine Li, and today, I'm here to write about why the danger of smoking should be taught to kids in school. Firstly, I'll tell you about the dangers of smoking, our solution to addiction, and finally, I'll persuade you why this is so important.

This might sound familiar to you. Perhaps you've heard it from guest speakers, TED talks, etc. You might think, why talk about this? Schools already teach this! Though this is true, only 64% percent of schools teach about the danger of smoking. According to the Canadian Cancer Society, smokers have a higher risk of getting at least 16 kinds of cancer. Smoking lowers your lifespan by at least 10 years, and half of smokers die from smoking related causes unless they quit. Can you imagine that, even with all these dark facts of smoking, even with the coughing fits and craving, teens still smoke? Young smokers are addicted to ruining their health, destroying their future, and breaking their future. And even worse? There's 200 million of them, slowly dying.

We've talked about the problem enough. Now, we need to talk about the solution. So, what is the solution? To teach the danger of smoking in school. Apparently, almost all of the teens who smoke want to quit, but can't. Yes, we do teach the danger of smoking, but only in the earlier grades, and 64% of schools. In high school, no one learns about it. Isn't it ironic that high school is also the most common place for kids to start smoking? There is no purpose in teaching the dangers of smoking to 5th graders, when they would just forget it, but teaching it in high school... now that might hit home.

Lastly, why is this so important? Why do we need to care so much about this, and put extra time and money into teaching the dangers of smoking? It's because this is the future generation we're talking about. Sure, you may complain about having to pay, because honestly, no one wants to pay taxes for their grandchildren, but think again. What will happen to that 60% of children? Do you think they will have a happy life? Do you think they will be able to live long? Will they know a time without the constant need, the craving for a cigarette? This isn't just for a few people with minimal effects. This is for our future generation, to keep their lungs healthy, sustain their life, and ensure that they can live happily.

What have I done for you today? Firstly, I talked about the dangers of smoking, and how it can shorten your lifespan. Then, I mentioned the solution, and how we can start teaching the dangers of smoking in high school. Lastly, I showed why this whole topic is so important, and why the money lost is worth saving the lives of all those addicted teens. Today, I want you to walk away with one thought. Maybe it's "You can do it." Maybe it's "Don't let your dreams down." All it has to be, is

some consolation to all those smokers out there. One thought, one saying, that lets them know... they can stop smoking. They can save their lives, and it all starts with you.