

Survey ID: _____

Date: _____

Get Your Facts Straight!

True or False?

DIRECTIONS: Write a "T" for True or an "F" for False by each statement.

- _____ 1) Most teens in South Carolina smoke.
- _____ 2) Smokeless tobacco (i.e., dip, chewing tobacco) is safer than cigarettes.
- _____ 3) Almost all high school smokers in South Carolina who decide to quit succeed.
- _____ 4) Smoking among South Carolina high school students has dropped over the past 10 years.
- _____ 5) Lung cancer is the fifth most common cancer diagnosed in South Carolina.
- _____ 6) The nicotine found in tobacco is not as addictive as heroin or cocaine.
- _____ 7) 103,000 South Carolina kids now under the age of 18 will ultimately die prematurely from smoking.
- _____ 8) Media promotions (e.g., car racing sponsorships, clothing, magazine ads, song lyrics, movies) have little or no effect on tobacco use.
- _____ 9) There are approximately 4,000 chemicals in a burning cigarette.
- _____ 10) Tobacco products contain a mild tranquilizer that accounts for their relaxing effect.
- _____ 11) The average tobacco user tries quitting five to six times before succeeding.

Agree or Disagree?

DIRECTIONS: Write "Agree" or "Disagree" by each statement.

- _____ 12) I believe that I can easily stop using tobacco products later.
- _____ 13) I am worried about the effects of tobacco use on my health at this time.
- _____ 14) I believe teen smoking is not a big deal.
- _____ 15) I expect to be a smoker at the age of 30.

Get Your Facts Straight!

The Answers

- 1) *Most teenagers in South Carolina smoke.* **FALSE**
Most teenagers do **not** smoke. Current surveys in South Carolina indicate that only about 18% of teenagers smoke cigarettes. That means 82% do **not** smoke. 7.9% of high school students have used dip or chewing tobacco in the past 30 days (*2007 South Carolina Youth Risk Behavior Survey [SC YRBS]*). However, this percentage can vary by county or school. What percentage of students in your homeroom class do you think use tobacco? Remember, you should think about not only the friends you hang out with, but an overall sample of teens at your school. "Most" would be defined as 50% or more.
Nationally, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) estimate that 23% of high school students are current cigarette smokers. Of those, 23% are female and 22.9% are male (*CDC, December 2006*). An estimated 10% of males in high school are current smokeless tobacco users, as are an estimated 4% of males in middle school (*CDC, December 2006*).
You do not need to feel pressured to smoke or chew. Not "everybody" is doing it.
- 2) *Smokeless tobacco (i.e., dip, chewing tobacco) is safer than cigarettes.* **FALSE**
Smokeless tobacco contains many of the same chemicals as cigarettes. Long-term users of smokeless tobacco may be 50% more likely to develop cancers of the mouth, throat, larynx and esophagus. Smokeless tobacco is also believed to contribute to cardiovascular disease and high blood pressure. Leukoplakia, white patches, and oral lesions on the cheeks, gums, or tongue are commonly found in smokeless tobacco users. About 75% of smokeless tobacco users will get leukoplakia, which can be an early sign of cancer (*American Cancer Society*).
- 3) *Almost all high school smokers in South Carolina who decide to quit succeed.* **FALSE**
Only about 55% of smokers who tried to quit were able to stay off cigarettes for 30 days (*S.C. Youth Tobacco Survey, 2006*). It will only get harder as you get older if you continue smoking or chewing. The time to quit is now!
- 4) *Smoking among South Carolina high school students has dropped over the past 10 years.* **TRUE**
In 1997, almost 40% of South Carolina high school students smoked, but now only about 18% do (*SC YRBS*). What do you think has contributed to the decrease in smoking? Possible reasons for the drop in tobacco use may include: Awareness of the dangers of tobacco use have increased and led to the passage of smoke-free ordinances, increased compliance checks and merchant education, perception of risk, and shift in media advertising. The passage of the Tobacco Settlement Act prohibited teenage tobacco use from being broadcast over television airwaves.

- 5) *Lung cancer is the fifth most common cancer diagnosed in South Carolina.* **FALSE**
The number is actually much worse. Lung cancer is the second most common cancer diagnosed in South Carolina (*S.C. Cancer Facts and Figures 2004-2005, S.C. Central Cancer Registry, S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control [DHEC]*). Seven counties have incidence rates that are significantly higher than the state average. They are Berkeley, Cherokee, Colleton, Darlington, Horry, Kershaw, and Lexington counties. Lung cancer accounted for 29% of all cancer deaths between 1996 and 2001. The biggest risk factor for lung cancer is tobacco use. It accounts for more than 85% of all lung cancer cases. Exposure to second-hand smoke greatly increases the risk of developing lung cancer (*S.C. Cancer Facts and Figures 2004-2005, S.C. Central Cancer Registry, DHEC*). The American Cancer Society estimates that nearly 3,000 new cases of lung cancer will occur in South Carolina every year.
Other diseases are also associated with tobacco use. They include heart disease, emphysema, and lung disease.
- 6) *The nicotine found in tobacco is not as addictive as heroin and cocaine.* **FALSE**
All three drugs are addictive. Nicotine reaches the brain in just seven seconds after entering the body through smoking. Heroin that is injected into a vein takes 14 seconds to reach the brain. Therefore, nicotine reaches the brain twice as fast as heroin! When cocaine is snorted, it reaches the brain in 10 to 12 seconds (*American Lung Association*). All of these drugs have powerful effects on the brain and may produce feelings the user wants to repeat. However, the body adapts, and it then takes more of the drug to get the same feeling (i.e., tolerance). This is part of the cycle of addiction. When you try to stop using any of these drugs, your body experiences physical withdrawal symptoms, such as heart palpitations, shaky hands, headache, nausea, and irritability.
- 7) *103,000 South Carolina kids now under the age of 18 will ultimately die prematurely from smoking.* **TRUE**
According to the South Carolina Tobacco Collaborative, 103,000 South Carolina kids now under the age of 18 will ultimately die prematurely from smoking. If you are interested in more information about our state's youth movement against tobacco use, please visit the web site for Rage Against the Haze at www.rageagainsthaze.com. There are more than 6,000 Rage Against the Haze members throughout South Carolina.
Early detection of lung cancer is difficult because there is no screening test for lung cancer and the symptoms often do not appear until the cancer is advanced. In South Carolina, from 1996 to 2001, the majority (67.6%) of lung cancer cases were diagnosed in the later stage of the disease (*S.C. Cancer Facts and Figures 2004-2005, S.C. Central Cancer Registry, DHEC*). Unfortunately, the prognosis is poor for those diagnosed in late-stage lung cancer.
- 8) *Media promotions (e.g., car racing sponsorships, clothing, magazine ads, song lyrics, movies) have little or no effect on tobacco use.* **FALSE**
Although tobacco companies can no longer advertise on television, ads can still be found in magazines. Actors smoking in movies may make smoking look "cool." Music lyrics may also talk about smoking or dipping and mention certain brands of tobacco such as Newport, Marlboro, or Grizzly Wintergreen chewing tobacco. What brands of cigarettes or dip do you and your friends use? Why? Does advertising affect you?

Tobacco companies spend \$22 million **every day** on advertising (Journeyworks Publishing, "Why Tobacco Companies Want You to Smoke"). During 2005, the five largest tobacco manufacturers spent a new record of \$250.79 million on smokeless tobacco advertising and promotion, versus the previous record of \$236.68 million in 2001 (Surgeon General's Report, www.cdc.gov). Tobacco companies wouldn't spend that much money unless they **knew** it worked.

- 9) *There are approximately 4,000 chemicals in a burning cigarette.* **TRUE**
More than 4,000 chemical compounds have been identified in tobacco smoke. Of these, at least 43 are known to cause cancer. Some of the 4,000 chemicals include carbon monoxide, tar, acetone, ammonia, formaldehyde, and cyanide. Smokeless tobacco (i.e., dip, chewing tobacco) and cigars also contain many of the same chemicals and cancer-causing chemicals as cigarettes (2000 Surgeon General's Report, www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics).

- 10) *Tobacco products contain a mild tranquilizer that accounts for their relaxing effect.*
FALSE
Nicotine is classified as a stimulant and therefore actually speeds up the heart rate – "exciting" you, not calming you down. Smoking releases epinephrine, a hormone that creates physiological stress in the smoker, rather than relaxation. The addictive quality of the drug makes the user feel he must smoke more to calm down, when in effect, the smoking itself is causing the agitation. Sometimes, smokers feel calmer because of the slow, steady, deep breaths involved in smoking a cigarette. The next time you are stressed, breathe in and out taking slow, steady, deep breaths and see if this helps you feel more relaxed without the dangers of cigarette smoke. Deep breathing using your diaphragm muscle located just below your ribs is a known technique for increasing relaxation and decreasing body tension and stress.

- 11) *The average tobacco user tries quitting five to six times before possibly being successful.* **TRUE**
Due to the strong addictive qualities of nicotine, it is not an easy process to just quit using tobacco at will. It will be easier to quit smoking as a teenager than if you wait until you are in your 20s or older.

- 12) *I believe that I can easily stop using tobacco products later.*
Consider This: Nicotine is so addictive that most people who start smoking or using tobacco products before the age of 19 end up smoking or using tobacco throughout their lifetime. Nine out of 10 smokers start using before the age of 19, even though the legal age for access is 18. One-third of young people who are just "experimenting" end up being addicted by the time they are 20. Only three out of 100 high school smokers think they will be smoking in five years...but in reality, 60 out of 100 will still be smoking seven to nine years later (*Rage Against the Haze*, www.rageagainststhehaze.com).

- 13) *I am worried about the effects of smoking on my health at this time.*
Consider This: Although you are still young and cannot always immediately see the effects of tobacco use on your body, the use of tobacco products can reduce your breathing capacity, leading to colds and other respiratory infections. Other side effects may include a faster heart rate, poor circulation in the legs and feet, yellowing of the teeth, and wrinkled skin.

14) *I believe teen smoking is not a big deal.*

Consider This: It is a big deal! Tobacco users face increased medical costs and higher life insurance rates. The medical costs get passed on to everyone. Each day in the United States, approximately 4,000 young people between the ages of 12 and 17 years initiate cigarette smoking, and an estimated 1,140 young people become daily cigarette smokers (*Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2005, "Results From the 2005 National Survey on Drug Use and Health"*). Cigarettes are a known killer, so why even begin to form a routine of using tobacco, knowing in advance that the product could eventually kill you? The brain continues to develop into early adulthood, (approximately 24 years old), so why not set a goal to have the healthiest brain function possible for yourself?

South Carolina has implemented methods of reducing underage access to tobacco by passing stricter laws and fines for underage tobacco use. The state also participates in the Youth Access to Tobacco Study, which has under-18 youth going into businesses such as convenience stores, grocery stores, and gas stations to see if merchants are selling tobacco to underage youth.

15) *I expect to be a smoker at the age of 30.*

For those persons who agree with this, explore reasons why or how they see themselves quitting the use of tobacco products.