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Is smoking stunting my growth? ^[1]

Dear Alice,

I was wondering if the rumor that smoking cigarettes stunts your growth is true? I am a smoker (not proud) but I do believe it may have stunted my growth or at least slowed it down. And if it does, is it permanent? Like, if I stop smoking, will my growth continue to do what it was originally going to do? Any information is helpful. Thank you I love this site.

Answer

Dear Reader,

Unfortunately, there isn't much research available on the influence smoking cigarettes has on growth specifically. Although the studies that have been done are largely inconclusive, the available research suggests that children who smoke or who are exposed to second-hand smoke are shorter than those who do not smoke or are children of non-smokers.

However, what HAS been proven is that smoking can do significant damage to other areas of your body including the growth of your lungs and respiratory function. Studies have shown that it takes less than five cigarettes a day to impair lung development in teenagers. Those teenagers who smoke also experience shortness of breath nearly three times more than those who don't smoke. They also produce phlegm in quantities more than twice that produced by those who don't smoke. Smoking cigarettes at an early age also increases your risk of lung cancer. To learn more about the dangers of smoking cigarettes, take a look at the [Cigarettes, Chewing tobacco, & Other Nicotine](#) ^[2] section in the *Go Ask Alice!* archives.

If you are a smoker and need help quitting, a good resource is [Smokefree.gov](#) ^[3] a site that offers tips and programs for smoking cessation. Elsewhere in the United States, take a look at the government site [Healthfinder](#) ^[4] to locate resources near you.

Alice!

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