



Short Safety Subject

Short Safety Subjects are provided by the Public Safety Business Center, Fort Bragg, NC. Our intent is to provide safety topics for the purpose of increasing safety awareness and improving safety performance. Additional Short Safety Subjects are available on the PSBC Business Management Web Site at:

www.bragg.army.mil/psbc-bm/PubsAndForms/ShortSafetySubjects.htm

Teach Kids...To Say NO To Tobacco

Every day in the United States 6,000 young people at the average age of 14 try smoking. More than 3,000 become regular smokers. That's more than a million new smokers a year.

Because the main ingredient in cigarettes, nicotine, is addictive just like alcohol, heroin or cocaine, once adolescents start using tobacco, it is very difficult for them to quit.

How do we teach our kids to say "NO" before they even start?

- Look for an opportunity to talk with your children about the dangers of tobacco and the negative effects it has on their health. Point out that only a small portion, "not everyone," is using it.
- Watch for changes in behavior like withdrawal from normal interests, radical changes in attitude and appearance, and declining performance in school and sport activities. If these signs are present, it is time to talk to your children about what's happening in their lives. An open discussion about important issues affecting them is critical to prevention and change.
- Teach them healthy values. A strong value system can give children the foundation to make good decisions, a reason to say no and the courage to stick with it.
- Prepare your children for difficult situations. Find out how they will respond to their friends when they are pressured to smoke. Ask them questions and role-play with them.
- Set the example. It's hard to preach convincingly against the evils of tobacco when you are using it yourself.

The key to keeping our children from making poor choices about tobacco use is parental intervention. The sooner we can catch the problem, the better it will be for our kids.