

## Is Your Teen Considering Body Art?



Did you know that Alberta has health regulations to prevent the customers who get body art from getting sick? Since the 1990's the provincial government has had regulations that artists have to follow. If your teen is considering getting a piece of body art or piercing here are some things to ask:

- Is the shop clean?
- Is there hot and cold running water?
- Is the shop separate from where people live?
- Are the tools single service or reusable? If the tools are reusable then how are they sterilized?
- Did the artist wash his hands before putting gloves on?
- What pre and post skin care are you getting?

Body art does require consent. Removal can be more painful than application, so it is important to talk to your teen about choosing the right shop, the right artist and the right body location.

## Teenage Tobacco Use

According to the Canadian Tobacco, Alcohol and Drugs Survey (CTADS) from 2013, the most recent available, 11 out of every 100 teenagers aged 15-19 smoke cigarettes in Canada. Of those, five percent reported smoking every day and six percent reported occasional smoking.

There is no safe level of tobacco use, even for those who report occasional use. When burned, tobacco contains about 7000 chemicals. About 70 of those are known to cause cancer.

Tobacco contains the drug nicotine, which is a powerful stimulant and is highly addictive. Nicotine reaches the brain within seconds and releases chemicals in the brain that bring on feelings of pleasure and relaxation. Research shows that nicotine exposure impacts brain development, and since teenage brains are still developing, this is a concern. Areas that seem to be most affected include problem solving and behaviour.

It can be hard for teens to understand the long term health consequences of tobacco use. Cancer, heart disease and other chronic illness can be things they don't feel will happen to them. When talking with teens there are areas that can be motivating for them to improve their health and well-being. By quitting they will notice:

- Their hair and clothes will smell better
- They will have more money to spend on other things
- Their sense of taste and smell will improve
- They will see an improvement in their breathing

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