What Is Smoking? Lesson Idea

Objectives

- Identify three immediate physical effects of smoking.
- Recognize that tobacco is made of harmful substances.

Prepare

- Download and print Take a Look Inside of You! visual

Materials

- Chart paper, easel and marker; Take a Look Inside of You! visual

Explore

1. Read the following poem to the class:

   I'm choking. No joking.
   It's very provoking.
   Like a bullfrog I'm croaking—
   'Cause SOME BODY'S SMOKING!

   Remind children they have learned that their hearts pump oxygen-filled blood throughout their bodies. Explain how they get oxygen into their bodies: by breathing fresh air into their lungs. Display the Take a Look Inside of You! visual and point out that the lungs are like two large elastic balloons in the chest cavity. The heart is located between the lungs.

   Take children outdoors. Invite them to stand still and take a deep breath, paying attention to the fresh air they are taking into their lungs. Have children run a short distance, stop and take another deep breath. How does your breathing change when you are running or doing some other physical activity? (A person breathes faster and/or more deeply to get more oxygen into the body.)

   It feels good to breathe fresh air when you are outdoors playing. How would you feel if there was a big bonfire out here and you were breathing smoke into your lungs instead of clean air? (It would be unpleasant; a person couldn't get the oxygen he or she needed.)

2. Back in the classroom, discuss cigarette smoking. Have you ever been around people who are smoking cigarettes? Allow children to share their experiences. How does it feel to breathe the air around people who are smoking cigarettes? (Unpleasant. It is difficult to get the fresh air one needs.)

   Explain that cigarettes are made from dried tobacco. Tobacco is a plant that many farmers grow in the southern United States. Some tobacco is made into cigarettes and cigars. Other forms of tobacco are used for chewing.

3. Title a large sheet of chart paper “Smoking.” Ask children to tell what happens physically to people who are around cigarette smoke and list children’s responses on the chart paper. Children may mention the following: watery eyes, cough, bad smell in hair and on clothes, difficulty breathing and heart beats faster while resting.

   What happens to people who smoke and breathe cigarette smoke into their bodies? Explain that cigarette smoke contains different substances that are harmful to a person's body. One of the harmful substances is
called nicotine. Nicotine has several effects on smokers: It makes the heart beat faster while resting, it temporarily increases blood pressure and it makes the blood vessels smaller.

Explain that cigarette smoke also contains carbon monoxide. Carbon monoxide is a poisonous gas. When it mixes with blood, it prevents oxygen from getting to a person's heart and other muscles. Carbon monoxide makes blood vessels shrink and harden and makes it easier for fatty buildup to stick to the walls of blood vessels. Less blood can flow through the blood vessels.

Display the "Smoking" chart that the class created. Do you think that smoking cigarettes is a healthful choice? Why? Encourage discussion about why smoking is not a healthy choice.