Can You Breathe?

**Objective:** Students will be able to understand the link between smoking and its effect on stamina and healthy lungs.

**Materials:**
- Drinking straws cut into 3" sections
- Upbeat music

**Posters:**
- *It Will Never Happen to Me*
- *Tobacco is Legal & Profitable*
- *Weapons of Mass Destruction*
- *Tobacco is a Real Lady Killer*
- *Jumbo Jet*
- *Stop Smoking Start Repairing*

**Introduction:**
Cigarette smoking is the major cause of lung diseases such as Emphysema, Chronic Bronchitis, and COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease), diseases that slowly destroys a person’s ability to breathe. People with these lung diseases are often left gasping for breath. Tell students that they are going to now do an activity that will help students understand what it’s like to have a chronic lung disease.

**Caution:**
Be sure participants have no health restrictions before they take part in the exercise. If any student experiences difficulty with breathing, they can stop this activity anytime.

**Activity:**
Give each student a 3-inch section of a drinking straw. Ask everyone to put the straws in their mouths and breathe only through the straw (not through their nose, they may pinch their nose to achieve this). Have them do this for 30 seconds. Now play some upbeat music and lead the group in a series of exercises until they are huffing and puffing, i.e. dancing to music, jogging on the spot for 30 seconds, jumping jacks. Breathe through the straw again while pinching their noses. Spit out the straws when they are running out of oxygen. Remove the straw and resume normal breathing.

**Discussion:**
This activity will demonstrate to the students that it is harder to breathe through the straw after physical activity. Let them know that that their body would also have to work harder if they were a smoker. Explain to them that smokers would have to work even harder to do these activities because smoking strains their heart and lungs. A person with emphysema, bronchitis, or COPD often has to keep an oxygen bottle nearby or breathe with the help of oxygen tubes inserted into the nose. Smoking also causes 90% of lung cancers and increases the risk of heart disease.

**Questions for Discussion**
1. Do you know who people who smoke?
2. Why do you think people use tobacco?
3. What would help someone stay smoke-free?
4. How could you help someone who wanted to quit?
Caution:
The students will now be watching two brief videos. The first one is about a young man named Bryan Curtis and it tells what happened to a young man who smoked. The Bryan Curtis Story, may cause some stress to those students who have relatives that smoke. Emphasize the health benefits of quitting smoking. (See The Good News in What’s in a Cigarette? activity). People who give up smoking have almost immediate health benefits.

Video: Bryan Curtis Story  http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=fvwp&v=dVLtNgAhPRg&NR=1
Quit Smoking Commercial 2007  http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GM2C0fiZcp8

Lung Facts The Good News…

The good news is that smokers can quit. In many cases the damage done by tobacco can be reversed. Within minutes of smoking that last cigarette, the body begins to repair and rejuvenate itself.

20 minutes after your last cigarette… Blood pressure and pulse rate will drop to normal. Body temperature increases to normal.

8 hours… Carbon monoxide levels in the blood drop and oxygen levels increase to normal.

24 hours… Chance of heart attack begins to decrease.

48 hours… Food begins to taste and smell better.

2 Weeks to 9 Months… Circulation improves; no more cold hands and feet. Coughing, congestion, tiredness, and shortness of breath decrease. Walking becomes easier and smoker’s cough will begin to fade away. The body’s overall energy will increase.

1 Year… Risk of heart disease is half that of a smoker.

5 Years… Chance of dying from lung cancer for the average former smoker decreases by almost half. Chance of a stroke will gradually reduce to that of a non-smoker 5-15 years after quitting.

10 to 15 Years… Chance of dying of lung cancer is about the same as that of a non-smoker. Risk of cancer of the mouth, throat, wind pipe, bladder, kidney and pancreas drop. Risk of heart disease becomes that of a non-smoker.
More good news…

Even reducing the amount you smoke can be helpful to your body. Cutting back is a great first step towards quitting.

Last year 5.6 million smokers quit and you can too!

Compliments of Smoker’s Help Line, Lung Association of Newfoundland & Labrador, and Canadian Cancer Society