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### **The Sooner Young Smokers Start, The Less Likely They Are to Quit**



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MONDAY, April 13, 2020 (HealthDay News) -- Kids and teens who take up smoking are more likely to become daily smokers and find it harder to quit by their 40s, a new study finds.

"Based on our data coupled with a variety of other evidence, we found childhood smoking leads to adult smoking," said lead researcher David Jacobs Jr, a professor of public health at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis. "Cigarette smoking, even experimentally, among children of any age should be strongly discouraged."

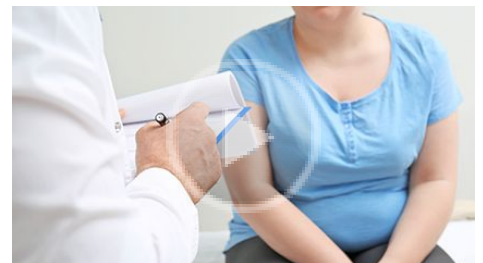
For the study, Jacobs' team collected data on more than 6,000 men and women who took part in an international heart study. Information was collected when participants were 6 to 19 years of age and during their 20s and 40s.

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The researchers found that teens who smoked the most and kids who started smoking early were likely to become daily smokers in their 20s and less likely to quit by their 40s. Even kids who only tried a few cigarettes were more likely to become adult smokers, the study found.

The percentage of participants who smoked daily in their 20s was 8% for those who had their first cigarette at 18 or 19; 33% for those who started at 15 to 17; 48% for those who began at 13 or 14; and 50% for those who had their first cigarette between 6 and 12 years of age.

Only 3% who started smoking later still smoked in their 40s.

Childhood smoking was about the same in all three countries studied -- Finland, Australia and the United States, the researchers noted. Though the study was conducted in three developed nations, they suspect the results would be the same elsewhere.

"Even in low-income and developing countries, the societal reinforcement of smoking, the basic addictive qualities of nicotine, and the maturation of children and children's judgment through adolescence are universal," Jacobs said. "As children mature through adolescence, they may have developed a better ability to resist impulses and to reject social pressures."

The study was published online April 8 in the *Journal of the American Heart Association*.

### More information

For more on kids and smoking, head to the [American Lung Association](#).

SOURCE: American Heart Association, news release, April 8, 2020

-- [Steven Reinberg](#)

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