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The Effects of Smoking

Smoking has many negative effects such as financially, physically, and mentally. People should not smoke, but they still do because its highly addictive. The nicotine in the tobacco is what gets a person hooked. There are also a lot of other bad things in cigarettes such as tar and chemicals. Once someone starts smoking, it can be very difficult to quit. Many families are influenced by smoking, and my family has been, and still is. Many families are affected by smoking, and my family is no different. I have clearly seen the impact of smoking on my grandfathers, my aunt, and my parents.

One major effect of smoking is evident with my grandfathers. Two of my four papas, my momma's daddy, and my daddy's daddy both have been diagnosed with Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD). COPD is a lung disease that makes it hard to breathe and includes chronic bronchitis and emphysema. Both grandparents must use oxygen, especially at night, to help them breathe better. Although, they both have all these difficulties they both continue to smoke cigarettes. That just goes to show how strong the addiction can be and how hard it can be to quit. Papa Johnny started chewing tobacco to try to reduce the amount of smoking that he does, but switching one for the other really is not any better in my opinion. He tried taking Chantix[®] once but it gave him bad dreams, so he stopped and continues to smoke. To my knowledge my papa Stanley has not made any attempts to quit smoking but continues smoking

while facing these problems. Hopefully, they will come to their senses and quit one day, but probably not.

Another person in my family who was negatively affected by smoking was my mother's aunt. Smoking is also a leading cause of lung disease including lung cancer. Unfortunately, my family has had to deal with this issue also. My mother's aunt had developed lung cancer and she was a smoker. It was sometime near the end of 2003 that she was diagnosed with lung cancer; shortly after that treatment was started. She went through both radiation treatment and chemotherapy. I was very young and do not remember much, but I do remember her losing a lot of weight and her hair falling out. It is a sad thing to see someone go through. Sadly she lost her battle with cancer at the age of 56 in December of 2004. Seeing her having to go through that and what it can do to a person gave me the knowledge to know I should never start smoking and made me an advocate to my parents in trying to get them to quit for years.

The biggest effect I have seen is on my parents. They, on the other hand, have had success in quitting smoking, but it was not easy for them. They have both made three attempts at quitting and have been smoke free for over a year now. My father had smoked for over 27 years before first attempting to quit and has spent approximately more than \$30,000 on cigarettes during that time. My mother had smoked for more than 20 years before she attempted to quit and has spent over \$20,000 on cigarettes. Imagine what they could do with that \$50,000 or more if they still had it now. In 2014 my father's place of employment went smoke free. It was then that they decided to make their first attempt at quitting. Sometime near the end of 2013 they went to the doctor and got prescribed Chantix[®]. They both took the medicine with success and were smoke free by January of 2014. They remained smoke free until August 2014, and then we had a house fire. The stress of that must have driven them back to smoking. Then I'm not sure of the

timeframe after that but they both made a second attempt to quit. During their second attempt my father used the nicotine gum and my mother used patches to quit. Although, they quit smoking for a while, they still had the addiction of nicotine due to the devices that they were using. I think it was during vacation in 2015 that they actuality started back smoking. Again, I am unsure of the time frame, but they went back to the doctor and was prescribed Chantix[®] again and stopped for the third and hopefully the final time. In May of this year 2018 marked a whole year that they have been smoke free. My father has confessed that there are times when he is stressed, or he gets a good smell of a Black & Mild cigar it can make him want to smoke, but knows he should not.

It is obvious smoking is bad and something that people should not be doing. It does not make someone cool. What it does do is make a person a smelly addict with a bad habit. So I would encourage anyone that's never tried it not to, and anyone that does to stop as soon as they can.