



Active&Free

*Young women, physical activity
and tobacco*



Canadian Association
for the Advancement
of Women and Sport
and Physical Activity

Canada

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Active & Free

Young Women, Physical Activity, and Tobacco

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In an effort to promote physical activity as a viable alternative to smoking, in 1994, CAAWS introduced the resource *Evening the Odds: Tobacco, physical activity, and adolescent women*. This resource provided parents, coaches and teachers with timely and tailored information to assist them as they guided young women through adolescence and helped them embrace a healthy lifestyle. Mindful of the alarming rate of physical inactivity in young women—the fastest growing segment of the population taking up tobacco—CAAWS revised this worthwhile resource and modernized it for today's physical activity leaders. The resulting book, **Active & Free**, was developed in 2007 along with the **Take 5** action primer to reflect CAAWS's increasing efforts to assert the rights of young women to optimal health and quality of life through equity, physical activity and sport. This is the second edition of the **Active & Free** resource.



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A WORD FROM TEAM CANADA HOCKEY STAR HAYLEY WICKENHEISER

If you are a physical education teacher, recreational worker, parent, coach or health promoter, this resource is specifically designed for you. **Active & Free** is a practical tool to support your work towards encouraging a healthy lifestyle for young women by keeping them physically active and tobacco-free... for life.

Think about it: As a physical activity leader, you are faced with daily opportunities to have a life-changing influence on the health of young women. From an informal conversation on the playing field to a more structured curriculum, you are in the extraordinary position of being able to reach young women in a very personal, credible way. You may use this privileged connection to clearly convey the positive features of an active lifestyle and, more importantly, help young women break down the barriers keeping them from the benefits of physical activity.

In the valuable moments when you work with young women, the most significant impacts you can have on their long-term health is to set them in motion physically and to protect them from the devastating effects of tobacco use—by either reinforcing a message of prevention or providing support toward quitting.

Consider:

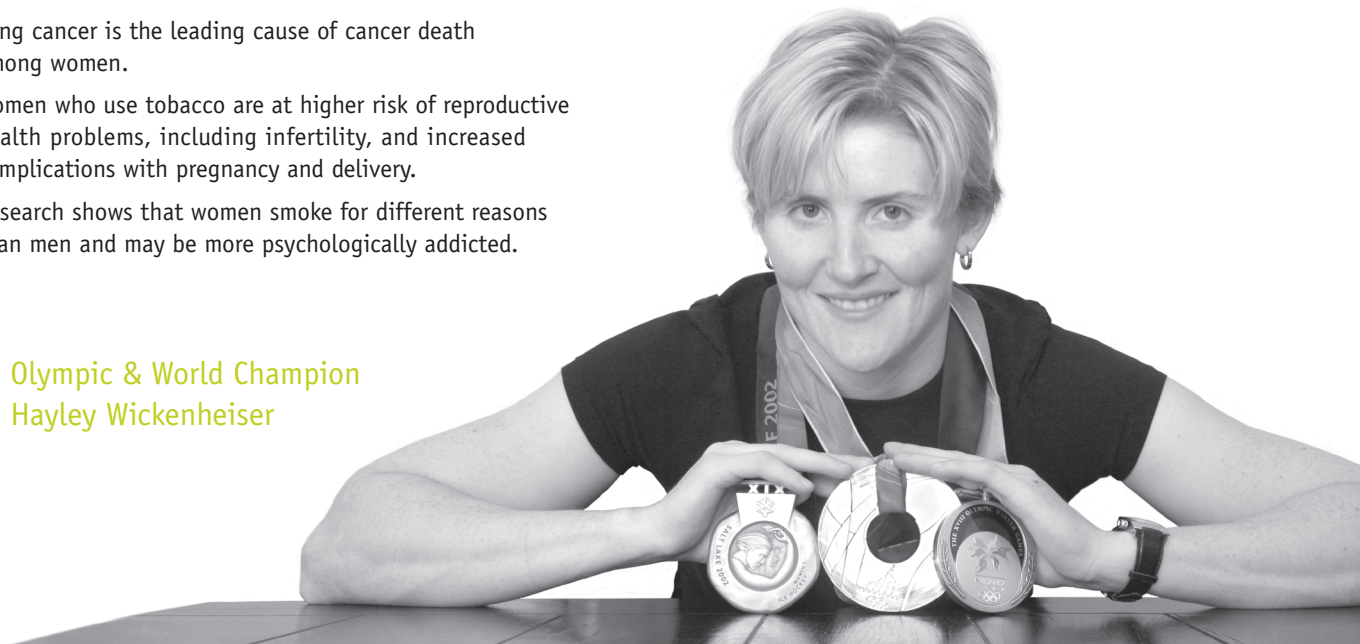
- Lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer death among women.
- Women who use tobacco are at higher risk of reproductive health problems, including infertility, and increased complications with pregnancy and delivery.
- Research shows that women smoke for different reasons than men and may be more psychologically addicted.

Olympic & World Champion
Hayley Wickenheiser

You have the trust of young women who learn about health through your teachings every day, and you can offer them a worthwhile resource tailored to their unique reality and needs. No doubt you have seen countless examples of your positive influence, when girls and young women learn new concepts and techniques, cultivate a love of physical activity, and grow personally through participation and a sense of belonging.

Levels of physical activity and rates of tobacco use vary among different ethnic groups, with Aboriginal youth at considerable risk. **Active & Free** presents helpful tips and tailored messages applicable to all Canadian young women.

You can use your unique leadership position to make a powerful contribution to the health of Canada's young women—promoting their well-being by keeping them active and tobacco-free.



MAKING THE CASE: THE CONNECTION BETWEEN PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND TOBACCO USE

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Physical inactivity and tobacco use

Young women at risk for both tobacco use and inactivity share many features, and the literature demonstrates a significant association between inactivity and smoking initiation.^{1, 2} For instance, low self-esteem and weight concerns are strong predictors of smoking initiation in young women,^{3, 4} factors which are also associated with inactivity.^{5, 6}

Studies demonstrate that self-esteem impacts specific factors such as confidence, perceived control and anxiety, which in turn influence participation in physical activity and smoking initiation.⁷ Due to the highly varied risk factors for youth smoking and physical inactivity, individualized programming tends to be the most successful intervention approach.

Physical activity and tobacco cessation

Recent evidence suggests that physical activity ought to be an integral part of tobacco cessation interventions and programs.⁸ Various studies report significant differences in tobacco abstinence between groups of physically active and inactive subjects,^{9, 10} including significant differences at a 12-month follow-up.¹¹

Physical activity tones down many of the physical and psychological symptoms brought on by nicotine withdrawal. Brisk physical activity reduces cravings and difficulties falling asleep during the first week after quitting.^{12, 13} One study demonstrated the moderating effect of physical activity on mood disturbances brought on by tobacco cessation—more specifically, on anxiety, tension and stress in the first week of abstinence, on irritability in the second week, and on restlessness in the third week.¹⁴ In another study, physically active abstainers showed an increase in positive

feelings and a decrease in depression four months after quitting, while inactive abstainers showed an increase in negative affect.¹⁵

Literature consistently identifies physical activity as an effective and healthy weight management strategy. Weight management is a major concern for women as they contemplate quitting, as well as a key element in their decision to act and a strong risk factor for relapse. Tobacco cessation programs should aim to reduce weight concerns and assist women in wisely estimating possible weight gain. As well, interventions should draw attention to the various issues related to healthy body weight, such as pressures to be thin, muscle mass and percentage of body fat.

In the context of tobacco cessation, physical activity also presents a range of advantages. By increasing self-esteem and coping abilities, physical activity significantly facilitates quitting efforts. People who are physically active as they quit smoking appear to have greater confidence in their abilities to maintain a smoke-free lifestyle.¹⁶ Physical activity also offsets the devastating short- and long-term health effects of smoking.

One study revealed that young adults show favorable attitudes towards physical activity as a strategy to support tobacco cessation.¹⁷ In this study, young adults reported that physical activity actually exposed them to the negative effects of smoking by accentuating them, which in turn motivated the young adults to quit. Young adults showed much enthusiasm and consideration for this strategy, and a strong majority believed that the promotion of smoking cessation programs should take place within a physical activity environment.

Physical activity as a healthy and enjoyable alternative to tobacco use

Physical activity has the potential to offer young women the immediate benefits that they may expect from tobacco use. In fact, looking at the perceived benefits of smoking and known benefits of being active, it is natural to consider physical activity as a positive and viable alternative to tobacco use.

Issue	Fact	Solution
Tobacco use is seen as a way to relax and relieve stress.	Tobacco use increases blood pressure and heart rate, and puts young women at increased risk of affective disorders in young adulthood.	Physical activity buffers the effect of stress, anxiety and depression.
Tobacco use is viewed as a way to make new friends or be accepted by peers.	There is nothing healthy about becoming friends with someone because they smoke, considering the dangerous effects of environmental tobacco smoke, of smoking's effects on energy levels and of lacking support systems during attempts to quit.	Physical activity promotes teamwork, breaks social isolation, and provides opportunities to make new friends and develop meaningful, healthy relationships.
Tobacco use gives a sense of independence and rebellion against parents or the societal roles of young women.	Smoking is basically following the pack and giving into addiction.	Activities such as kick-boxing, soccer, running, self-defence and judo not only challenge the passive female myth, they provide young women with a sense of empowerment and the strength and abilities to be outgoing and self-reliant.
Tobacco use is seen as a symbol of status or as a way to present a certain image and reputation.	More and more teenagers are seeing tobacco use as an addiction and therefore a loss of control.	Taking part in sports and physical activity programs offers status, and broadcasts an image of intelligence, maturity, accomplishment and intensity.
Tobacco use is perceived as a way to manage weight.	Tobacco use can lead to unhealthy eating behaviours and weight gain.	Regular physical activity is a healthy and reliable way to maintain a healthy weight.

PREVENTION

Be kind to your body

During adolescence, young women establish habits and values that will likely follow them into adulthood. Accordingly, they must learn how to respect and properly care for their body. An attentive approach and tailored interventions are critical at this stage of their development. A tobacco-free lifestyle, physical activity, healthy eating and self-acceptance are the pillars of healthy minds and bodies, so challenge young women to take them on.

Tobacco-free lifestyle

The significant benefits of a tobacco-free lifestyle are known and acknowledged by all, even young women. So why do they light up? A young woman's decision to allow tobacco into her life is multifaceted and rarely only personal. A young woman's motivation may arise from a set of factors including:

Socioeconomic status: The association between smoking initiation and socioeconomic status is well established. Young women from lower income families are more likely to be exposed to environmental tobacco smoke and to start smoking during adolescence.

Tobacco advertisement: From fashion magazine ads to tobacco use in movies, young women are repeatedly bombarded with compelling and positive images of tobacco use. Many studies reveal that smoking initiation in young women is significantly attributable to this pervasive exposure.^{18, 19, 20} As young women are greatly influenced by the media, they are tempted to believe that smoking is normal and acceptable. Also, the connotations of social desirability, emancipation and beauty attached to smoking dramatically downplay the dangerous health effects.²¹

Self-acceptance and body image: Factors such as negative body image, low self-esteem, low expectations for the future and weight concerns are strong predictors of smoking initiation in young women.^{22, 23} During adolescence, young women's self-

image tends to decline dramatically while their weight concerns significantly rise; hence, these psychosocial variables must be addressed in tobacco prevention efforts. Evidence shows that interventions aiming to promote self-esteem and healthy weight control strategies are extremely effective in preventing tobacco use.^{24, 25}

Stress and negative emotions: Many young women consider tobacco use as a reliable mechanism for coping with stress and negative emotions, which are known to considerably intensify during adolescence. The idea that nicotine provokes a state of euphoria that eliminates negative feelings can strongly influence young women's decision to smoke.^{26, 27} The links between stress, coping strategies and smoking are well established.^{28, 29} Constructive and self-directed coping styles appear to minimize young women's vulnerability to smoking.³⁰

As such, **critical lessons and skills that young women must take on include identifying constructive, self-directed coping strategies, assessing the cost and benefits of their strategies, and coming up with healthier alternatives to managing stress and negative emotions.**

Tobacco use in peers and family members: Circles of friends and social networks strongly influence young women's decision to smoke. Having one or two best friends that smoke significantly increases smoking initiation in young women.^{31, 32} One study showed the proportion of females using tobacco was actually smaller than that of males when they had no friends using tobacco.³³ Recent studies examining the nature and underlying mechanisms of this influence suggest that the decision to use tobacco hinges on the desire to cultivate a certain type of reputation among peers.³⁴

Physical activity

Physical activity plays a vital role in the global development of young women by developing their cardiovascular fitness, strength, flexibility and bone density, and helping maintain a healthy body weight. In the long run, active women reduce their risk for premature death and chronic diseases, such as osteoporosis, cardiovascular diseases and cancer. **The psychological benefits of physical activity range from positive self-esteem, enhanced self-efficacy, improved academic and cognitive performance, to a healthier outlook on life.** Socially, physical activity fosters a sense of belonging, teamwork skills and social connections.

Given the recognized value of physical activity, the high proportion of inactive young women is alarming. Many barriers keep young women from engaging in physical activity, such as lacking support from parents; lack of suitable programs, facilities and equipment; and perceived lack of skills. On the other hand, factors engaging young women in physical activity include enjoyment, perceived competence, self-efficacy and positive physical self-perceptions.³⁵ Evidence also suggests that interventions that promote these positive psychological variables, like organized sport and family support, are effective in increasing physical activity levels in young women.³⁶ Various environmental, behavioural and social strategies can facilitate enrollment and retention of young women in physical activity programs, including:

1. Encouraging and organizing accessible physical activity programs in schools and the community; focusing on non-competitive enjoyable programs providing opportunities for social interactions, such as walking clubs or beginner level popular dance lessons.
2. Working with partners to increase the availability of affordable and safe after-school transportation, and to promote the development of programs tailored to the needs of inactive young women.
3. Raising awareness in young women and their parents about the importance of physical activity; focusing on the positive effects of physical activity on self-esteem, confidence and academic performance; and promoting various school and community programs aimed at young women.

4. Developing behavioural and cognitive skills that will set young women in motion—problem-solving, decision-making, goal-setting, monitoring and interpersonal skills will naturally motivate inactive young women to take part in physical activity programs. For example:

- holding brainstorming sessions with young women on perceived and real barriers to physical activity and on ways to overcome them;
- teaching young women how to define simple, achievable and realistic goals, and how to identify and weigh the physical and psychological benefits they feel as they become regularly active.

5. Aiming to increase young women's self-efficacy levels and their confidence to engage in physical activity by organizing programs and initiatives that provide a level playing field to all participants. These programs can include sport sampler initiatives in which young women briefly sample a variety of new atypical sports (e.g., rugby, self-defence, etc.).
6. Being honest and transparent about the challenging realities of physical activity, such as muscle soreness, time commitment, gradual skill development, etc.

The Canadian Association for the Advancement of Women and Sport and Physical Activity (CAAWS) offers the **On the Move** initiative (www.caaws.ca/onthemove), which provides innovative ideas and effective strategies to decrease the barriers to participation in physical activity that girls and young women confront. Targeted information is also available about the needs of Aboriginal and newcomer girls and young women.



Let them know what they're getting into

Short-term effects of tobacco use include:

- Increased heart rate and blood pressure;
- Constriction of blood vessels, making it harder to carry oxygen throughout the body;
- Dizziness, hand tremors and coldness in fingers and toes;
- Increased vulnerability to allergens;
- Increased coughs and colds;
- Increased stomach acid production;
- Reduced appetite, which can help reduce weight in the short term;
- Reduced senses of smell and taste;
- Bad breath;
- Decreased physical endurance; and
- Brief increase in mental functions, followed by a period of reduced brain activity.

Long-term effects of tobacco use include:

- Increased risk of cardiovascular diseases;
- Increased risk of developing a range of cancers, including those of the lung, cervix, larynx, mouth, esophagus and pancreas. Specifically, active smoking and second-hand smoke have been linked to rising rates of breast cancer;³⁷
- Increased risk of developing emphysema and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease;
- Shortness of breath;
- Frequent coughs and respiratory infections;
- Increased risk of stomach ulcers;
- Unremitting bad breath;
- Stained teeth;
- Stained fingers and nails;
- Wrinkling of the skin;
- Unhealthy appearance, sallow complexion;
- Decreased fertility;

- Low birth weight of a baby born to a smoker; and
- Increased risk of miscarriages and complications at birth and during prenatal development.

The three levels of addiction

Tobacco addiction is complex and affects the person who smokes physically, psychologically and socially:

1. *Physical addiction:* This occurs as tobacco use becomes more and more regular. The body gets used to a certain level of nicotine and therefore requires it on a regular basis. For some, addiction can develop in a matter of weeks while for others, it may take months or up to a year. When nicotine levels suddenly fall, withdrawal symptoms start. The severity and duration of withdrawal effects vary from one tobacco user to another but, eventually, symptoms disappear.
2. *Psychological addiction:* This is learned and evolves around how tobacco is used to cope with stress, negative emotions and conflict. It develops from the pleasurable sensation induced by nicotine and its perceived capacity to help reduce bad situations or feelings. As a result, stressful circumstances or emotionally upsetting events can act as triggers for smoking.
3. *Social addiction:* This can develop as smoking is used within social settings, either to cope with social anxiety or awkwardness, or for the purpose of social interaction and acceptance.



The most common tobacco addiction withdrawal symptoms are:

- Feeling irritable or short-tempered;
- Feeling tense, anxious or fearful;
- Difficulty paying attention;
- Feeling restless or agitated;
- Difficulty sleeping;
- Slower heart rate;
- Increased appetite;
- Mild flu-like symptoms;
- Headaches;
- Constipation;
- Tremors;
- Coughing and sore throat; and
- Mouth sores or blisters.



On top of decreasing many of the physical and psychological symptoms brought on by nicotine withdrawal, physical activity also allows young women to:

- Cope with stress;
- Perform better in school;
- Have fun with family and friends;
- Sleep better;
- Feel better and have more energy;
- Build strength and endurance;
- Develop healthy habits; and
- Learn skills to cope with life, including:
 - Effective communication, problem solving, and interpersonal skills;
 - Self-expression and decision-making skills;
 - Coping skills to deal with anger and stress;
 - Relaxation and balance;
 - Self-esteem; and
 - Confidence.

Smoke-free homes and cars: talk about it and find a solution

Smoke-free homes and cars, especially when parents smoke, undeniably convey the message to adolescents that smoking is unacceptable and should not be explored.^{38, 39} Adults enforcing smoke-free homes and cars not only intensify their own motivation to quit, they increase their own chance for success as well.⁴⁰

Evidence reveals that total smoking bans or smoking restrictions at home significantly moderate the transition of adolescents from experimental to regular smoking.⁴¹ Young women who are exposed to environmental tobacco smoke at home or

in their family car can be encouraged to talk about their issues with their parents and find sensible solutions, such as these:

- Do not keep ashtrays in the house;
- Display a smoke-free sign or window sticker at the entrance of your home or on the passenger-side window of your car;
- Remove the ashtray in the car; and
- Make frequent stops during a trip to accommodate smokers.

CESSATION

A tobacco-free life is a challenge, but it is within reach

Young women can be extremely vulnerable, extra sensitive and prone to great insecurities. Many young women unfortunately believe that smoking can alleviate these feelings and pressures. Whether it is to manage weight, calm nerves or deal with low-self esteem, the driving force behind smoking must be addressed, otherwise young women will not attempt quitting, will likely fail if they try, or will quit smoking and move onto another addiction or unhealthy behaviour.

The bottom line is that though young women may take up tobacco to feel better, by doing so they accomplish the exact opposite. A young woman who smokes at least one pack a day will be 15 times more likely to develop panic disorders and five times more likely to develop generalized anxiety disorders in her 20s and 30s, compared to a non-smoker.⁴² Smoking significantly impairs breathing and reduces lung capacity, which in turn increases the body's levels of carbon monoxide. High levels of carbon monoxide trigger an instinctive panic response characterized by trouble breathing, racing heartbeat and heavy sweating.

Young female smokers face a vicious circle that is difficult to break. First, young women who smoke to calm their nerves significantly limit their oxygen uptake, giving rise to panicky and edgy feelings that trigger smoking. Second, as nicotine level drops, they experience jitteriness and irritability, which they then alleviate by smoking. Young women are capable of perceiving and understanding how this cycle dramatically and physically encourages them to continue smoking. Physical activity, therefore, becomes pivotal in breaking this cycle, as it tackles nicotine withdrawal, improves sleep, helps with mood disturbances and relieves stress. Since nicotine withdrawal symptoms naturally disappear after a few weeks of total abstinence,

the short-term effects of physical activity on nicotine withdrawal symptoms can provide temporary support for young women. In the long run, regular physical activity can assist them in staying smoke-free by facilitating weight management and fostering self-confidence.

Let them know what they're getting into

Below is a description of the immediate and long-term health benefits after a young woman smokes her last cigarette (from the *Quit 4 Life* handbook⁴³):

Within 8 hours...	Carbon monoxide level drops in her body and blood oxygen level increases to normal.
Within 48 hours...	Senses of smell and taste improve and chances of having a heart attack start to go down.
Within 72 hours...	Lung capacity increases and bronchial tubes relax, making breathing easier.
Within 2 weeks...	Nicotine is removed from the body.
Within 3 months...	Circulation improves and lung functioning increases up to 30%.
Within 6 months...	Coughing, sinus congestion, tiredness and shortness of breath improve.
Within 1 year...	Risk of smoking-related heart attack is cut in half and risk for cavities is lower.
Within 10 years...	Risk of dying from lung cancer is cut in half.
Within 15 years...	Risk of dying from a heart attack is equal to a person who never smoked.

Also, a young woman who quits smoking:

- Reduces her chances of developing infections and colds;
- Prevents early wrinkling because her face gets the oxygen and blood it needs;
- Increases her energy level because more oxygen circulates through her body;
- Stops her teeth and fingers from turning yellow;
- Sets a great example for children (including her younger brothers and sisters) and other smokers; and
- Reduces the risk of damaging her favourite clothes.

Financial return

If a young woman gives up her daily pack of cigarettes, she will save approximately \$10,000 in three years and \$35,000 in 10 years (on the assumption that one pack costs on average \$9 and there is a 2% increase in price per year). Even just a week of buying one pack of cigarettes per day costs as much as buying three CDs, two DVDs or a concert ticket. **Challenge young women who smoke to calculate how much each cigarette costs and to consider other things they could spend their money on or save up for.**



Put young women on the road to success

To successfully quit smoking, young women need to make a plan. Health Canada's **Quit 4 Life** program provides ongoing support by leading them through the following four-step process designed to help them kick the habit for good:

Step 1: Get Psyched. This section provides all the incentives that young women need to make the necessary commitment to quit, from the health risks of smoking, to the financial benefits and value statements.

Step 2: Get Smart. In this section, young women learn about their reasons for smoking, their smoking triggers, their addiction and other strategies to prepare for success.

Step 3: Get Support. This section gives tips on how to get the support that young women need and how to deal with non-supporters and peer pressure.

Step 4: Get On With It. This section guides young women in the final stretch. From survival kits to identifying a quit date, this section includes everything young women need to take the plunge.

Encourage young women to take the first step towards a smoke-free lifestyle by visiting the **Quit 4 Life** website at: www.quit4life.ca.

UNMASKING TOBACCO: TAKING THE ORDINARY OUT OF TOBACCO

11

Anti-tobacco campaigns

Studies indicate that anti-tobacco advertisements have gained momentum in the last decade and have effectively prevented smoking initiation in youth, especially young women.^{44, 45}

These campaigns aim to educate adolescents about the intentions and marketing tactics of tobacco companies in order to reach adolescents at high and low risks for smoking, as both groups seem to share anti-industry attitudes and reactions.⁴⁶

An excellent example of anti-tobacco marketing is *The Truth* campaign, which fosters the following three attitudes: “I don’t smoke to express my independence;” “I must take a stand against tobacco companies and smoking;” and “I must get involved in tobacco prevention efforts.” After a 10-month marketing campaign in the United States, the percentage of youth who adopted the intended anti-tobacco attitudes increased four-fold, while the number of adolescents agreeing that tobacco companies lie doubled. However, the real success of *The Truth* campaign is the resulting sharp decrease of smoking rates in youth.^{47, 48}

Further, the government is supporting anti-tobacco campaigns through changes to the existing Tobacco Act that will ban print tobacco advertising as well as the individual sales of flavoured cigarillos, cigars and “blunt-wrap” rolling sheets that appeal to youth because of their low cost and tempting candy taste.

Tobacco restrictions

Numerous studies demonstrate how tobacco use restrictions and adolescents’ attitudes toward anti-tobacco policies play a major role in smoking initiation.^{49, 50} Though meaningful and sensible strategies exist—like smoking bans in public places and the recent addition of wall panels to cover tobacco products in stores—evidence suggests that the mere presence of a policy is not enough to prevent youth smoking initiation unless it is perceived to be consistently enforced.^{51, 52} A large body of evidence also calls for tougher regulations on tobacco marketing at point of sale to reduce youth exposure to tobacco products in stores. Retail tobacco advertisements have been found to

significantly influence adolescents and even encourage them to consider smoking.^{53, 54}

About tobacco companies

In 2006, tobacco companies paid Canadian retailers over \$106 million to display their products or signs.⁵⁵

A study in the United States revealed that tobacco advertising even placed susceptible non-smokers at risk of experimenting with smoking.⁵⁶ Another American study points out that when the advertising budget for the Joe Camel brand went from \$27 million to \$43 million between 1989 and 1993—the number of adolescents smoking Joe Camel cigarettes doubled as a result.⁵⁷ Furthermore, in the United States, 60% of teenagers smoke Marlboro cigarettes, the top advertised brand, compared to 25% of adult smokers.⁵⁸

Keeping pace with the women’s liberation movement, tobacco companies introduced women-specific brands in the 1970s. Pervasive slogans and images of successful, independent, stylish and sexy women flooded magazines and billboards. “Low tar” and “light” brands were also introduced to cater to this new clientele. The perfect example of a women-specific brand is Philip Morris’ Virginia Slims, introduced in the 70s with its tag line,



"You've come a long way, baby." Women have indeed come a long way since the 1970s; they are dying just as fast as men of heart diseases and lung cancer. Philip Morris followed this campaign by the "It's A Woman Thing" campaign in the 1990s and, more recently, the new Virginia Slims campaign, "Find Your Voice," which features beautiful women from around the world. Most recently, tobacco companies have re-branded their cigarette packages with cute, colourful designs and "purse packs" that appeal to young girls, despite the prohibitions against lifestyle advertising specified by the Tobacco Act.^{59, 60}

Each year, tobacco companies spend billions of dollars on advertising in developing countries where women's liberation movements are gaining ground. Though gender equity greatly contributes to women's overall health (sexual, reproductive, etc.), it unfortunately leads to increased rates of smoking in women. As they long for equality, women become more vulnerable to tobacco advertising: in industrialized countries, approximately 22% of women smoke compared to 9% in developing countries, with the latter number climbing at an alarming rate.⁶¹

Get talking!

Connect with young women through edgy, captivating discussion questions that are relevant to their lives:

- Have you noticed pro-tobacco messages on social network sites like Facebook and MySpace? How do you feel about them?
- Have you noticed pro-tobacco messages in women's fashion and beauty magazines? How do you react to seeing models and photo spreads that promote smoking?
- Have you noticed pro-tobacco messages in teen television shows or movies? How do you respond to these unhealthy, unethical strategies?

Let them know what they're getting into

During adolescence, young women develop their identities, discover their passions and aspirations, and long for a sense of belonging, all of which make them more vulnerable to the deceptive nature of tobacco advertisements. Prompt young women to think about the following facts:

Ever notice how tobacco ads...

- Use healthy, fit, smiling and beautiful models?
- Present compelling ready-to-wear identities? Virginia Slims capitalizes on women's desire for thinness, beauty, emancipation and serenity; Winston's "No Bull" campaign provokes rebellion and individualism; Du Maurier caters to aspirations of success, friendship and materialism; Players conveys masculinity, confidence and independence; and Camel once used a "spokescartoon."
- Compare tobacco products to food or candy? Juicy Jay's Cigarette Rolling Papers, for instance, offer 17 different fruit and sugary flavours to entice youth into smoking by enhancing the taste of cigarettes.⁶²

Ever notice that in movies...

- Smoking characters are still overwhelmingly present, despite common knowledge about tobacco's dangerous effects? In fact, tobacco is notably featured in 68% of the 200 top movies of all time, with the majority portraying its use positively and without negative consequences.⁶³ Although many organizations are working to reduce these statistics, especially in films that appeal to youth,⁶⁴ many cool or rebellious movie characters are still portrayed smoking as a way to relax or deal with a stressful situation.
- Particular brands are strategically displayed? In the 1990s, unsavoury connections between the movie industry and tobacco companies were revealed. It appeared that many tobacco companies spent substantial amounts of money to have key characters smoke a particular brand in a movie.
- Cigarette smoking is used to charge intimate scenes or relationships? Or for a dramatic or sensual impact?
- Smoking conveys toughness in heroes and villains alike?
- The proportion of smokers is higher than that in real life?

The effects of producing the 15 billion cigarettes smoked every day worldwide...

- Tobacco, like many other crops, is extremely sensitive to pests and requires huge amounts of fertilizers and pesticides. Among many other toxic pesticides, 5.5 million pounds of methyl bromide was applied to tobacco fields across the world in 1997 alone, and this ozone-depleting substance creeps into streams, rivers and, eventually, the food chain.⁶⁵
- Over 200,000 hectares of forest are cut each year for curing tobacco leaves.⁶⁶ About 12 cubic feet of wood is needed to cure one ton of tobacco leaves; in Malawi alone, 35,000 tons of tobacco leaves are cured every year, and Malawi is not even one of the top five tobacco-producing countries.⁶⁷
- As tobacco growers and field workers handle and carry wet tobacco leaves, they become vulnerable to green tobacco sickness, which is characterized by nausea, dizziness, abdominal cramps, and irregular heart rate and blood pressure. In family-run tobacco farms, children as young as seven work in tobacco fields. Since children are significantly more vulnerable to green tobacco sickness, they often suffer serious health consequences as a result.
- Contraband cigarettes are on the rise among adolescent smokers in Canada, accounting for 18% of cigarettes smoked in Canadian high schools, and for 26% in Ontario and 30% in Quebec. Many youth will justify these illegal cigarette purchases knowing they are saving on every pack.

The environmental damage of tobacco use...

- Burning tobacco is the most prevalent source of indoor pollution in industrialized countries.
- Cigarette litter is fast becoming an environmental crisis. In the United Kingdom alone, 122 tons of cigarette litter are discarded every day.⁶⁸

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Challenge young women's attitudes

Provoking dialogue on tobacco industries and tobacco production can easily create dissonance in young women. Dissonance occurs when a young woman's attitudes are inconsistent with her behaviours. For a young woman who smokes but entertains strong attitudes about global issues, the shocking realities of tobacco production may likely arouse strong feelings of compassion, followed by an unsettling sense that her smoking behaviour harms more than just herself. Attitudes give a predisposition to behave

in a certain manner—the more the attitude is strong and specific, the stronger is the predisposition:

- Pay special attention to attitudes relevant to independent lifestyles, environmental impacts or global issues;
- Initiate a dialogue using some of the facts covered in this section; suggest a visit to relevant websites; and
- Let young women face up to their own behaviours.

YOUR ROLE AS A PHYSICAL ACTIVITY LEADER

Be politically wise

Be the voice for smoke-free spaces. Smoking inside has been strongly regulated but efforts are still needed to encourage parents and spectators not to smoke near building entrances or on the sidelines. Talk to students, parents and spectators, challenge their attitudes, and insist on smoke-free sidelines and stands. Ultimately, if a young woman does not start using tobacco by the age of 18, she will most likely never start. So take a stand now and be persistent:

- Acknowledge your influence with young women and do not smoke around them.
- Remind them constantly of the immediate effects of tobacco use (for example: poor athletic performance).
- Adopt a zero-tolerance for tobacco use in players, parents, coaches and referees.
- Insist on and reinforce tobacco-free youth events.
- Consider dynamic partnerships with tobacco prevention programs and events in your community.
- Find out about access to tobacco by youth, and when you see it, report it to health authorities.
- **Put it in writing:** Write an official letter making it clear that the field sidelines and stands, at all practices, games and competitions, will be tobacco-free. Distribute the letter to students, players, parents and referees. (Please see Appendix A for a sample letter.)



The importance of tobacco-free events

When consistently exposed to firm tobacco control policies, young women develop a perception that tobacco use is wrong under all circumstances. Such moral and legal perceptions significantly decrease the likelihood that adolescents will experiment with or start smoking.⁶⁹ Enforcing tobacco-free youth events is one of the most significant tobacco prevention strategies that physical activity leaders can accomplish, so initiate dialogue with parents and spectators with the following cue sentences:

- “At [*name of school or centre*], we are concerned about sending out mixed messages to our players, which is why we insist on tobacco-free events.”
- “At [*name of school or centre*], we put a lot of energy into convincing students and participants to stay smoke-free or to quit smoking. Please do not smoke on the sidelines.”
- “Let’s work as a team; we need positive role models for our players, so please do not smoke in the stands or on the sidelines.”

Increase your knowledge

Read up on contemporary tobacco issues. The CAAWS website (www.caaws.ca) offers links to the following resources:

- Health Canada’s Go Smoke Free program
- The Public Health Agency of Canada
- The Canadian Lung Association’s Lungs for Life program
- Tobacco-Free Sports and Recreation
- Canada’s Physical Activity Guide
- Quit 4 Life
- ... and many more!

APPENDIX A

Dear parents,

As your child's coach [*insert alternative title here: e.g., instructor*], I am writing to you to enlist your help. Together, you and I are a team. Our team's goal should always be the health and well-being of [*insert young woman's name, e.g., Isabelle*].

Though I do not have the time to address all the important issues relating to the development and maintenance of a healthy lifestyle when speaking to the kids, I will nonetheless try to take a few moments now and then to discuss with them the importance of physical activity as an alternative to unhealthy behaviours such as smoking. For this I need your help, and together I am sure we can make a difference.

I am not a nutritionist, nor am I a smoking cessation counsellor. It is important, however, that we both encourage [*insert young woman's name*] to consider the negative effects of smoking as either a preventative or cessation measure. Protecting her from the devastating effects of tobacco use and exposure may be the single biggest impact we can have together on her long-term health. I will do what I can to explain to the kids how active living is an important alternative to tobacco use—if you could do the same, that would be extremely helpful as a message sent twice will have a bigger impact. Resources like the ones listed on the CAAWS website (www.caaws.ca) are excellent references if you would like to learn more.

If you smoke:

If you smoke at home, in the car or even at outdoor sporting events, please be aware of the great impact such behaviour has on [*insert young woman's name*]. I would strongly encourage you

to make these places smoke-free and explain to her why you feel it is important to do so. The effects of second-hand smoke are well documented. If you cannot or do not wish to quit smoking, at least explain to your child how important it is to you that she does not start or that she quits.

If you do not smoke:

Even if you do not smoke, remember the saying, "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure." I encourage you to speak with [*insert young woman's name*] about the importance of physical activity in her life and express how incredibly proud and happy you are that she is being physically active, whether or not she plays sports at a competitive level. The short- and long-term impacts of physical activity are well documented in science and include increased positive self-esteem, improved academic performance, a healthier outlook on life, and improved fitness, strength, flexibility and bone density. Physically active children also show reduced risks for many diseases, such as osteoporosis, heart disease, cancer and diabetes, and they are more able to maintain a healthy body weight.

If you would like to speak with me about this further, please feel free to contact me at your convenience. Thank you for the opportunity to be with [*insert young woman's name*], she's a great kid—you must be very proud!

Sincerely,

[*Insert your name here*]

[*Insert your telephone number here*]

Download the digital version of this letter from the CAAWS website (www.caaws.ca/activeandfree).

For more information on physical activity, tobacco use and young women, please visit Health Canada's website at:
www.quit4life.ca

HELP US EVALUATE THIS RESOURCE!

Help us strive to learn from our work by telling us how you used **Active & Free**. Simply tear out and fax this page (double-sided) back to CAAWS at **613.562.5668** or, if you prefer, email your answers to: **caaws@caaws.ca**.

1. What motivated you to pick up and read this resource?

2. Were you able to apply anything you learned from the resource when speaking or working with young women?

If no, please go to question 9.

3. How did you use the information from this resource?

4. Approximately how many young women did you reach with your message(s)?

5. What is their approximate age?

6. Approximately what percentage of these young women smoke?

smokers: ____% **non-smokers:** ____% **Don't know** ____

7. Please tell us briefly about the young women's reactions to the information in this resource.



8. Do you think there will be any lasting impacts on these young women? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, what do you think these will be?

9. Do you think you will use this information in the future? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, please tell us how.

10. Have you read the accompanying **Take 5** Action Primer that comes with **Active & Free**? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, have you used the information?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, please tell us briefly how.

Thank you for your time in helping us evaluate this resource.

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Tell us what you think online!

Share more comments and feedback on this resource and on other CAAWS materials on our website. This evaluation form is also available online. Visit www.caaws.ca for details.

www.caaws.ca

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NOTES

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ABOUT CAAWS

The Canadian Association for the Advancement of Women and Sport and Physical Activity (CAAWS) is a national non-profit organization dedicated to creating an equitable sport and physical activity system in which girls and young women are actively engaged as participants and leaders. CAAWS provides a number of services, programs and resources to a variety of clients, including sport and physical activity organizations, teachers, coaches, health professionals and recreation leaders. CAAWS works in close co-operation with government and non-government organizations on activities and initiatives that advocate for positive change for girls and young women in sport and physical activity in Canada.

For more information, please email CAAWS at caaws@caaws.ca.

Strategic directions

1. **Leadership:** CAAWS leads nationally and internationally on issues affecting girls and women in sport and physical activity. CAAWS supports the development of more opportunities for women to lead and works to enhance support for women in leadership roles.
2. **Participation:** CAAWS works collaboratively across organizations and sectors to ensure girls and young women, regardless of circumstance, have access to the benefits of regular participation in quality sport and physical activity experiences.
3. **Education:** CAAWS educates people on issues related to girls' and young women's participation in sport and physical activity through the creation and provision of knowledge, materials and support needed to understand and build an equitable sport and physical activity system.
4. **Community Awareness and Engagement:** CAAWS develops relationships, builds partnerships and collaborates with individuals and community, as well as provincial, territorial and national organizations to create an equitable sport and physical activity system.

Initiatives and key resources

- **On the Move** is a national initiative that increases opportunities for inactive girls and young women (ages 9 to 18) to participate in physical activity and sport. Targeted information is also available about the needs of Aboriginal and newcomer girls and young women.
- **In Her Voice** provides insight into the sport and physical activity needs, interests and experiences of girls and young women (ages 13-18) based on focus group discussions. Practical recommendations support the creation of positive programs and inclusive environments.

- Combining theory and interactive exercises, **Unleash your Leadership Potential: A Workshop for Young Women** covers the range of leadership skills and attributes that will assist young leaders (ages 15-20) to take on roles as planners and decision-makers in school, through volunteer activities, and in their future careers.
- **Seeing the Invisible, Speaking about the Unspoken—Addressing Homophobia in Sport** is a national initiative aimed at eliminating homophobia in Canadian sport. CAAWS provides tools and information to help individuals and organizations better understand what homophobia is and what they can do to make sport more welcoming to lesbian, gay, bisexual and two-spirited (LGBT) persons.
- **Sex Discrimination in Sport – An Update** provides an up-to-date legal snapshot of the “lay of the land” as it applies to sex discrimination today. Seven real-life discrimination scenarios set the stage for an explanation of the subtle issues that now enter legal analysis of discrimination. Federal and provincial jurisdiction is described, along with some of the unique circumstances of the Canadian sport system that make a jurisdictional analysis somewhat challenging.
- **In the Loop** – Stay “in the loop” with the CAAWS monthly eNewsletter and receive updates about CAAWS programs, events, opportunities and issues related to girls and young women and sport and physical activity. Sign up for this free publication through the CAAWS website.
- **The CAAWS Website** (www.caaws.ca) is one of the most comprehensive online resources in Canada about sport and physical activity for girls and young women. The site provides information on CAAWS programs and resources, and highlights the accomplishments of local, national and international female participants and leaders in sport and physical activity.

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