

Which will you choose?

Suzuka Kinjo

Hi everyone. First, have you ever tried smoking, or do you have any friends who smoke? Today, I would like to talk about secondhand smoke.

Have you ever thought you would like to try smoking, like just one time. To be honest, I did, I wanted to try when I was younger. Just as children wonder how alcohol tastes, I wanted to try cigarettes. It wasn't from peer pressure, but my curiosity made me think like that.

I think everyone has heard about how bad smoking cigarettes are and how they affect non-smokers as well as the smoker themselves. Though, I didn't think about it deeply and just thought "smoking is bad for our health". But one day, I had a chance to hear about the changes in the body of someone who has smoked for a long time. He said that "My voice has changed and I cough a lot. Also, my lungs got black and the lungs that are damaged are unable to be fixed". I was just surprised that the damaged lungs are unable to be repaired, and I also wondered why having black lungs is so bad. Since I heard this story, I have become more serious about learning about the effects of smoking.

In class, I learned that smoking increases the risk of cancer, heart disease, and strokes. Also, it makes you lose your concentration. Not only that, but the worst part of it is that the smoke of cigarettes also causes problems for non-smokers, something which is known as "secondhand smoke". According to the National Cancer Center, it says that after smoking, harmful substances remain in smoker's breath for forty-five minutes. This applies to all kinds of cigarettes, including vapes or e cigarettes. Therefore, spending time with people who have just finished smoking could actually harm a non-smokers' health. We would never know whether the person sitting or standing next to us has just finished smoking or not, but we, the non-smokers, are constantly in the position of being exposed to secondhand smoke. Isn't it unfair? Even though we non-smokers try to be healthy, simply breathing in secondhand smoke nearby could raise the risk of us getting a disease without even realizing it.

You have probably all heard that starting smoking is easy but it's much harder to quit. According to the National Cancer Center, about one-third of smokers try to quit every year but only one to three percent of the smokers succeed. One person I know quit smoking when his wife became pregnant, after considering the effects of secondhand smoke on their baby. On the other hand, another person that I know has been smoking for more than ten years and is unable to quit.

For non-smokers, there might be some situations where you find yourself sharing a bus, room, or train with smokers or people who smell of smoke. In those cases, the best thing to do is to keep your distance or move to another seat. If someone is actually smoking in a non-smoking area, it is better to speak to the staff rather than warning the person directly. However, if you do decide to speak up, speak politely and calmly to avoid offending them.

Next time when you smoke, please consider whether this action makes you and those people around you happy.

Thank you for listening.