NICOTINE ADDICTION AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE

Every day another 3000 young people become regular smokers. The tobacco industry has argued that the decision to smoke and to continue smoking is a free choice made by an adult. However, nicotine addiction is really a condition that begins in young people. Many young people who experiment with tobacco become addicts within a few years. According to studies, between one third and one half of adolescents who try smoking even just a few cigarettes soon become regular smokers.

What is perhaps most shocking is that 7 out of 10 young people who smoke report that they regret ever having started. Three out of four young smokers have tried to give up smoking at least once and failed to do so. Young people are aware of the dangers associated with smoking and nicotine addiction, but they do not believe that these dangers apply to them. Until they are in the grip of nicotine addiction, they greatly underestimate its power over them. The epidemic of addiction to nicotine among young people has enormous consequences for public health. Each year in the United States, more than 400,000 smokers die of smoking-related illnesses.

We cannot deal with this enormous health problem without recognizing the important influences on a young person's decision to smoke. One such influence is the tobacco industry's advertising and promotion. In 2002 alone the cigarette industry spent more than $5.2 billion on advertising. Tobacco is advertised in the print media; on billboards; in the stores that sell it; on consumer items such as hats, T-shirts, jackets, and lighters. Tobacco companies also sponsor athletic, musical, and sporting events. Studies show that tobacco advertising and promotion are especially effective with young people. For example, a recent study found that 86 per cent of underage smokers who buy their own cigarettes buy one of the two most heavily advertised brands: Marlboro and Camel.

It seems that a ban on tobacco is not possible in the United States. Removal of tobacco from the market could lead to serious bad effects on those addicted to nicotine and possibly result in a black market as well. A more reasonable approach is to focus on the problem of smoking where it begins — in young people.

Such an approach should have three objectives: to reduce access to tobacco products by children and teenagers; to convince young people that nicotine is addictive and that tobacco products cause serious health problems for them, not just for other people; and to curb tobacco advertising and promotion that encourages young people to begin using tobacco products. The solution to this epidemic lies in the next generation. If we can change young people's attitude towards smoking, then we can definitely reduce the number of smoking-related death and disease.

PART A. Answer the question below.

According to the writer, what are the two reasons why young people become addicted to nicotine even though they know the health risks?

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PART B. Write a paragraph of 150-180 words and discuss two or three solutions to the problem of obesity among children.

You may use the following points or you may develop your own ideas.

* providing a healthy diet
* encouraging children to participate in sporting activities

Write your paragraph on the lines provided below.
- Young people become addicted to nicotine even though they know the health risks because they do not believe that these dangers apply to them until it’s too late. Moreover, they are influenced by the tobacco industry's advertising and promotion. Tobacco is advertised everywhere even at athletic, musical, and sporting events and this is especially effective with young people.