

Let's live healthy life

Chat show, level – intermediate

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Presenter: Young people today are more aware of the environment than ever before. This is the first really “green” generation. But there are so many different green issues. There is a greenhouse effect, acid rain, air pollution, nuclear waste, habitat destruction... the list seems to go on forever. Which of these seems to you the most important, the most urgent? We are going to ask some teenagers about their green priorities. We welcome Nick, a member of Greenpeace.

Nick, 17: I am a member of Greenpeace, and I go on any protest marches or things that they might organize. I think the most important issue is nuclear power. The waste it creates is not being disposed off satisfactorily. This is a problem because it takes so long to become safe. There is no acceptable way to store it in that time. Nuclear waste could potentially cause irreversible damage. But overall I would say that I'm fairly optimistic. I think that the Earth has a way of getting around these things.

P: The guest of our studio today is Sophie.

Sophie, 15: I worry most about the rain forest. We learnt about it in geography. Too much is being cut down, for the benefit of rich corporations. It is difficult to replant once it is cut down, because the nutrients in the soil are washed away. The forest houses so many varieties of birds and other animals that do not exist anywhere else in the world. When they lose their home they become extinct. We should grow our own supply of trees if we want to cut them down to make paper.

The other thing that bothers me is pollution in the city. I go to school in London, where there is disgusting gray smog most of the time. In the future, people will be working from home with computers. So there won't be so much traffic and pollution. I think more people should take the bus or walk, or ride a bike instead of driving their own cars.

P: Our new guest is James with the problem of greenhouse effect. How dangerous is it, James?

James, 17: At the moment what affecting us most is the greenhouse effect, the climate all over the world, reduced rainfall, higher water levels, etc. It's been caused by old fridges, aerosol cans... but I'd say the main offenders are probably things like cars and old coal-powered power stations. Obviously they should try and make things more efficient within the power stations and encourage people to be more efficient in their homes. We need research and development into other sources of power such as solar power, wind power and wave power. Nuclear energy is an alternative, but in the long run we could end up regretting it.

I like to recycle things, so resources aren't wasted – cans, bottles, papers, magazines, and anything that I can find and recycle. I'm optimistic. I believe there is probably a wind of change.

P: Claudia, do you know what to do, do you have any advice to the society?

Claudia, 19: There are lots of environmental problems, but I don't feel I can do anything about it myself. It is also big and out of control. For one thing, how can you have clear opinions about all these scientific things? And another problem is: only the politicians are in the position to do anything about it, and they don't seem to care that much. It is not worth voting for the Green party, because they are so small. And the other parties don't want to do anything serious because it would be unpopular. I suppose in the end things will get so bad that they will just have to do something.

P: Nadia worries about animals and their habitat. What is your attitude to the wild life in the time of great changes?

Nadia, 17: The main problem in my opinion is building – roads, cities, factories, car parks, airports. Agriculture is bad as well. Soon there won't be any countryside left. We are not leaving room for wild life to survive. Habitat is the most important thing for animals and plants. You can't save species by having a few individual animals in zoos around the world.

At the same time I love cars. I'm learning to drive at the moment, and I would like a car when I get a job. I know that cars are part of the problem. But it is hard to apply your ideas to your own life, isn't it?

P: Another problem which is very serious in the society is smoking. Researches of Tufts University in Massachusetts studied 180 cats for 7 years. What did they find out?

Researcher: We found out that those who were exposed to cigarettes smoke in the home for 5 years were three times more likely to develop the cancer. In homes where there were two smokers, the risk was quadrupled. So, if you won't quit smoking for the sake of your family then do it for your cat. Passive smoking could kill it. Although cats rarely develop lung cancer, scientists have discovered that living in the smoke filled house dramatically increases their chances of contracting feline lymphoma, the most common form of cat cancer.

P: We have the fact file about smoking in the studio. Do you think the statements are true or false?

- The 20-24 age group smokes more than any other.
- A quarter of Britain's 15-year-olds are regular smokers.
- In 1994, children between the ages of 11 and 15 smoked a billion cigarettes.
- Every year, 120,000 smokers in the UK die from their habit – about 330 people every day.
- More people in Britain die from smoking than from road accidents, murder and AIDS.

(All the statements are true)

There are some examples which help us give up smoking. Clive Bates, director of an anti-smoking group has just joined us.

Clive Bates: Our school in Durham has a new lesson – how to stop smoking. Teenagers asked for the lunchtime lessons in place of smoking in the toilets. Teachers at Longfield Secondary school joined us to make the school a smoke-free area.

The teenagers are right to get help. They can see it's not a clever thing to do. I hope more schools follow their example.

P: The problem of smoking is very important all over the world. The 31 of May was proclaimed The World No Smoking Day. What slogans for the anti-smoking campaign can be used on this day?

Examples:

- Smoking is a very bad habit.
- Smoking isn't cool or glamorous.
- Smoking is very unhealthy for you.
- Chewing gum useful to help you to stop smoking.
- Smokers are right to give up.
- Tobacco seriously damages health.

P: Thank you for participating in our program and see you next time.