Take a Deep Breath

Directions: Read the story, then answer the questions. Write your answer in the space provided or circle the letter next to the correct answer.

The tissue of your lungs is naturally pink, and is kept clean by cilia, tiny hairlike projections which help move particles through the lungs. A smoker's lungs become gray and black because the cilia cannot keep up with the large amounts of tar and soot produced by smoke. The tar and soot leave deposits on the lung tissue, making it black and congested. Your lungs are also filled with mucous cells which help to keep the lungs moist. Lungs need to be wet because without moisture, oxygen can't pass through the air sacs and enter into the blood cells. The chemicals in smoke also get inside the air sacs and tiny tubes in the lungs, causing the mucous to become thick and sticky, which eventually plugs the tubes. This clogging makes it difficult for a person who smokes to get enough air, which in turn causes them to pant easily. Eventually, lungs may become stiff from the smoke's chemicals and become unable to fill. Smokers' are also unable to exhale easily, which is one of the symptoms of emphysema.

1. What causes lungs to become black?

2. Why must your lungs remain moist?

3. What part of the lungs works to keep lung tissue clean?
   a. air sacs
   b. mucous cells
   c. cilia
   d. emphysema

4. What do you think is the biggest lung problem smokers face?