

TOBACCO FACT SHEET

YOUTH AND SMOKING



OVERALL

- According to data from Monitoring the Future (MTF), 9.6% of teens are current cigarette smokers.¹
- Other data sources, such as data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), also have prevalence data on youth tobacco use:
 - **Middle school students:**
 - Overall, 3.5% of middle school students (grades 6-8) are current cigarette smokers and 6.7% of middle school students currently use any tobacco product, which includes cigarettes, cigars, smokeless tobacco, tobacco pipes, bidis, kreteks, hookahs, snus, dissolvable tobacco, or electronic cigarettes.²
 - Among middle school students, cigars (2.8%), pipes (1.8%), and smokeless tobacco (1.7%) are the most commonly used forms of tobacco, other than cigarettes(3.5%).²
 - **High school students:**
 - A total of 41.1% of high school students (grades 9-12) have ever tried a cigarette and 15.7% currently use cigarettes.³
 - Current tobacco use among high school students is 22.4%, which includes cigarette, cigar and smokeless tobacco use.³
- According to MTF, cigarette use among eighth graders has declined by more than two thirds since 1996, a peak time for teen cigarette use, from 21% to 4.5% in 2013.⁴
- Other data sources, such as data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), also have data on trends in youth tobacco use over time:
 - Youth cigarette use declined sharply between the mid-1990s and 2004. Although this decline has decelerated, by 2013, smoking prevalence amongst 8th, 10th, and 12th graders was down from peak levels by 79%, 70%, and 56% respectively.⁴

SUBGROUPS

YOUNG ADULTS

- Almost 90% of adult smokers start smoking by 18 years of age and 99% start by the age of 26.⁵
- A total of 17.3% of 18-24 year olds are current smokers.⁶

FEMALES

- In 2012, 3.2% of female middle school students were current cigarette smokers.²
- A total of 15% of female high school students are current cigarette smokers.³
- Young mothers aged 15 - 19 are more likely than young women who were not mothers to have smoked cigarettes in the past month (35% vs. 20.7%).⁷

MALES

- In 2012, 3.8% of male middle school students were current cigarette smokers.²

- A total of 16.4% of male high school students are current cigarette smokers.³
- Smoking rates of male students (grades 9-12) are higher than that of their female counterparts.^{3,4}
- Male teens are more likely than female teens to use smokeless tobacco, such as snuff and snus. In fact, 12th grade males' use smokeless tobacco at a rate almost 10 times that of females and use among American youth is almost exclusively a male behavior.⁴
- Cigar use among high school males (16.5%) is almost twice as high as cigar use among high school females (8.7%).³
- A majority of high school males who currently use tobacco use more than one product concurrently.⁸

SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS AND EDUCATION

- Cigarette smoking among youth increases with decreasing levels of parental education.⁴
- Among 19-22 year olds, about 28.1% of those not enrolled full-time in college are current smokers, compared to 14.0% of those enrolled in college full-time.⁹

LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, AND TRANSGENDER (LGBT)

- Most national and state surveys do not include questions about sexual orientation and gender identity and, when included, inadequate sample size and varying definitions hinder the use of the collected information.¹⁰ 2013 was the first year that the National Health Interview Survey, conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, included questions about sexual orientation.¹¹ However, a report with data from 2013 has not been released yet.
- In the 2009 Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System, a survey conducted in almost every U.S. state, only seven states and six large urban school districts, asked questions regarding one's sexual identity and/or gender of sexual contacts.¹² Important findings from the CDC's summary of these results include the following:
 - More than twice as many gay or lesbian students and bisexual students have smoked a cigarette before the age of 13 compared to heterosexual students.¹²
 - Gay or lesbian students and bisexual students smoke more than their heterosexual counterparts.¹²
 - There are disparities in current cigarette smoking rates between the heterosexual and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) young adults, with only 11.8% of heterosexual young adults indicating that they currently smoke compared to 19.0%, 16.9%, and 33.2% of homosexual, bisexual, and transgender young adults, respectively.¹³

AMERICAN INDIANS AND ALASKA NATIVES

- A total of 62.3% of American Indian or Alaska Native high school students have ever smoked cigarettes, while 24.6% are current cigarette smokers.¹⁴ This is the highest rate of cigarette smoking among youth of any racial or ethnic group in the U.S.⁸

WHITE AMERICANS

- A total of 3.1% of white middle school students are current cigarette smokers.²
- Almost one in five white high school students (18.6%) are current smokers.³

AFRICAN AMERICANS

- In total, 2.6% of African American middle school students are current cigarette smokers and 7.7% of African American middle school students use any tobacco products, which includes cigarettes, cigars, smokeless tobacco, tobacco pipes, bidis, kreteks, hookahs, snus, dissolvable tobacco, or electronic cigarettes.²

- A total of 8.2% of African American high school students are current smokers, which is a 21% decrease from 2011.^{3,14}

HISPANIC AMERICANS

- A total of 5.4% of Hispanic middle school students are current smokers, and 10.5% reported using some form of tobacco.²
- Hispanic middle school students have the highest rates of tobacco use, which includes cigarettes, cigars, smokeless, tobacco pipes, bidis, kreteks, hookahs, snus, dissolvable tobacco, or electronic cigarettes.²
- As of 2013, 14% of Hispanic high school students reported being current smokers, and 18% reported using any tobacco.³
- As of 2011, 21.3% of Hispanic high school students reported using combustible tobacco, which includes cigarettes, cigars, tobacco pipes, bidis and kreteks.

ASIAN AMERICANS

- In 2012, 1.7% of Asian Americans aged 12 – 17 years old and 16.3% of Asian Americans 18 – 25 years old were current smokers.¹⁵ This is the lowest rate among all racial/ethnic groups.

HEALTH IMPACT

Short-Term Health Consequences

- In the short-term, young smokers tend to be less physically fit than their non-smoking peers and have overall diminished physical health.⁸

Long-Term Health Consequences

- In the long-term, studies have shown that, due to cancer's association with number of years as a smoker, smoking from a young age increases lung cancer risk.⁸
- Young smokers are at an increased risk for early onset cardiovascular disease.⁸
- About one-third of youth smokers who continue smoking into adulthood will die prematurely from a tobacco related disease.⁸

Pulmonary function and respiratory symptoms

- Current smoking among children and adolescents can cause wheezing severe enough to be diagnosed as asthma.⁵
- Cigarette smoking during adolescence appears to reduce the rate of lung growth and the level of achievable maximum lung function. These and other health problems are risk factors for developing respiratory diseases in adulthood, such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD).⁵

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- ¹ Johnston LD, O'Malley PM, Bachman JG, Schulenberg JE. *Monitoring the Future national survey results on drug use, 1975–2012: Volume I, Secondary school students*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Institute for Social Research;2013.
 - ² Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Tobacco product use among middle and high school students - United States, 2011 and 2012. *MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep*. Nov 15 2013;62(45):893-897.
 - ³ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance — United States, 2013*. June 13 2014.
 - ⁴ Johnston LD, O'Malley PM, Bachman JG, Schulenberg JE, Miech RA. *Monitoring the Future national survey results on drug use, 1975-2013: Volume I, Secondary school students*. Ann Arbor: Institute for Social Research, The University of Michigan2014.
 - ⁵ U. S. Department of Health and Human Services. *The Health Consequences of Smoking—50 Years of Progress*. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention,, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion,, Office on Smoking and Health;2014.
 - ⁶ Agaku IT, King BA, Dube SR. Current cigarette smoking among adults - United States, 2005-2012. *MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep*. Jan 17 2014;63(2):29-34.
 - ⁷ Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality. *The NSDUH Report: Substance Use among Young Mothers*. Rockville, MD March 10, 2011.
 - ⁸ U. S. Department of Health and Human Services. *Preventing tobacco use among youth and young adults: a report of the Surgeon General*. Atlanta, GA: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health;2012.
 - ⁹ Johnston LD, O'Malley PM, Bachman JG, Schulenberg JE, Miech RA. *Monitoring the Future national survey results on drug use, 1975-2013: Volume II, college students and adults ages 19-55*. Vol II. Ann Arbor: Institute for Social Research, The University of Michigan. 2014.
 - ¹⁰ American Lung Association. *Smoking Out a Deadly Threat: Tobacco Use in the LGBT Community*. American Lung Association;2010.
 - ¹¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *2013 National Health Interview Survey* Hyattsville, Maryland. 2014.
 - ¹² Kann L, Olsen EO, McManus T, et al. Sexual identity, sex of sexual contacts, and health-risk behaviors among students in grades 9-12--youth risk behavior surveillance, selected sites, United States, 2001-2009. *MMWR Surveill Summ*. Jun 10 2011;60(7):1-133.
 - ¹³ Rath JM, Villanti AC, Rubenstein RA, Vallone DM. Tobacco use by sexual identity among young adults in the United States. *Nicotine Tob Res*. Nov 2013;15(11):1822-1831.
 - ¹⁴ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *Youth Online: High School YRBS*. 2013.
 - ¹⁵ Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. *Results from the 2011 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: Mental Health Findings*. Rockville, MD: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. NSDUH Series H-45, HHS Publication No. (SMA) 12-4725;2012.