

Tobacco Facts

Traditional Tobacco

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Many Indigenous nations have traditional stories of how tobacco was introduced to their tribes and communities.

It is estimated that the tobacco plant has been used in a sacred way by American Indians for over 18,000 years.

Traditional tobacco stories emphasize the sacredness of the plant and its powers to both heal if used properly and to harm if used improperly.

Traditional or sacred tobacco plant varieties vary from tribe to tribe and region to region.

Traditional tobacco is still used by many tribes.

Some tribes grow their own tobacco gardens. Which plant varieties are grown, who tends them and who harvests them, how they are harvested, and how they are used vary from tribe to tribe and region to region.

Traditional tobacco is often gifted to elders or to people who share wisdom or prayers.

Traditional tobacco is often burned during prayer and other ceremonies.

While traditional tobacco does contain nicotine, it is not processed with chemicals or used in the same way as commercial tobacco so does not pose the same health risks.

Provided by the National Tribal Tobacco Prevention Network, a project of the Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board.



For more information, call 503.228.4185 or visit the website: www.tobaccoprevention.net. Funded by CDC, grant #U1A DP000556-01.