

Tobacco Facts

Youth Initiation

www.tobaccoprevention.net

Nearly every adult who smokes (almost 90%) took his or her first puff at or before the age of 18.¹

Current smoking among high school students at Bureau of Indian Affairs high schools is 56%², more than double the smoking prevalence rate among all U.S. high school students⁸

In a study of high school seniors, only 5% of those who smoked believed they would still be smoking two years after graduation. In fact, 75% were still smoking eight years later.³

The adolescent brain is more receptive than the adult brain to the addictive properties of nicotine—symptoms of dependence can occur after just one exposure to nicotine.⁴

Children and teenagers make up the majority of all new smokers, and the tobacco industry's advertising and promotion campaigns target young people.⁵

Nearly half of the young people who smoke as few as 3 cigarettes go on to become regular smokers.⁶

Cigarette smoking by young people leads to serious health problems, including cough and phlegm production, an increase in the number and severity of respiratory illnesses, decreased physical fitness (both performance and endurance), adverse changes in blood cholesterol levels, and reduced rates of lung growth and function.⁷

In a national survey, American Indian and Alaska Native youth were more likely than youths from other racial/ethnic groups to smoke cigarettes during the previous.⁸

Sources:

1. CDC. Symptoms of Substance Dependence Associated with Use of Cigarettes, Alcohol and Illicit Drugs, United States 1991-1992. Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR), November 10, 1995.
2. CDC, *Tobacco, Alcohol, and Other Drug Use Among High School Students in BIA-Funded Schools*, 2001.
3. CDC. Reasons for Tobacco Use and Symptoms of Nicotine Withdrawal Among Adolescent and Young Adult Tobacco Users, United States, 1993. Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, 1994.
4. Belluzzi JD, Lee AG, Oliff HS, Leslie FM. (2004) Age-dependent effects of nicotine on locomotor activity and conditioned place preference in rats. *Psychopharmacology*, DOI: 10.1007/s00213-003-1758-6.
5. CDC. Reducing Tobacco Use—A Report of the Surgeon General. Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2000.
6. Giovino GA, Zhu BP, Tomar S. Epidemiology of tobacco use and symptoms of nicotine addiction in the U.S. Testimony to the FDA, Aug. 2, 1994; CDC. Preventing tobacco use among young people—A report of the Surgeon General.
7. CDC. Preventing Tobacco Use Among Young People—A Report of the Surgeon General. Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1994.
8. CDC, *Use of Smokeless Tobacco Among Adults*, U.S., 1991.

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.