

What Are the Latest Facts About Teens and Tobacco?

Statistics on Tobacco

We know the best way to prevent something is never to get started. It is important that we present to our children a solid, anti-tobacco message. Many studies have shown that you, as parents, are the best deterrent to future use of tobacco and other drugs. In a CASA study on teens and drugs, their research showed that “morality trumps legality” with our children. The values you instill in your children speak more powerfully than all the laws. So, here are facts.

- Depending on the study, 3.5 million or 4.5 million teens between the ages of 12 and 17 use tobacco.
- Between 3,000 and 4,000 children under the age of 18 begin to smoke each and every day.
- Half of these children will become regular smokers, and half of those will die from smoking-related illnesses.
- Teens who smoke come down with illnesses more often than teens who don't smoke.
- When compared to teens who don't smoke, teen smokers have smaller lungs and weaker hearts.
- If the present trends in tobacco use continue among children, it is estimated that 6.4 million children will die prematurely from smoking-related illnesses.
- In the United States, smoking is the single most preventable cause of premature deaths, greater than alcohol, car accidents, suicide, AIDS, homicides and illegal drugs combined.
- Teen smokers are more likely to progress to use alcohol and other drugs.
- Children who begin smoking before age 11 are addicted by age 14.
- 54% of high school students have tried cigarettes sometime during their school careers.
- When asked, only three of 100 high school smokers believe they will be smoking five years later, but studies show 60 of 100 will still be smoking seven to nine years later.
- Approximately 12% of middle school students report some form of tobacco use at least once in the past month.
- Approximately 28% of high school students report some form of tobacco use at least once in the past month.
- In the United States, 66.5 million people use tobacco.
- If a person were to smoke a pack of cigarettes a day, on average, their life expectancy is seven years shorter.
- It is estimated that smoking costs the United States over \$150 billion dollars in health-care costs each year.
- People who smoke build tolerance for nicotine, and they will need more and more nicotine as their tolerance increases.
- Smokeless tobacco, pipes and cigars are not safer alternatives to cigarettes.
- About 3% of adults in the United States are current users of smokeless tobacco (adult men 6% and adult females 0.3%).
- 4% of middle school boys and 2% of middle school girls use smokeless tobacco.
- 20% of high school boys and 2% of high school girls use smokeless tobacco.
- Chews (8-10 dips) contain as much nicotine as two packs of cigarettes.
- Leaving a dip in the mouth for just 30 minutes releases as much nicotine as smoking three cigarettes at one time.
- Young white males have higher smokeless tobacco use than American Indians and Alaskan Natives.
- 8% of white, 5% of Hispanic and 3% of African-American high school students use smokeless tobacco.
- 3% of white, 4% of Hispanic, 1% of Asian and 2% of African-American middle school students use smokeless tobacco.

How Does Pennsylvania Compare to the Rest of the Nation?

A study was done between 2002 and 2005 to help to determine the level of risk faced by our children when it comes to tobacco use.

- 161,000 Pennsylvania high school students smoke.
- 32.8 million packs of cigarettes are bought or smoked by PA children each year.
- 300,000 PA children under 18 will die prematurely from smoking.
- \$5.19 billion spent in PA annually in tobacco-related health-care costs.
- \$680 is spent per household in state and federal tax burden related to smoking-caused government expenditures.
- \$706 million is spent by tobacco companies marketing their products in this state.
- In 2002, 8% of public high school students used smokeless tobacco in PA.
- In 2002, 2.8% of public middle school students used smokeless tobacco in PA.
- In 2005, 11% of public high school students used smokeless tobacco in PA.
- Nearly 20% of students in PA public high schools have used smokeless tobacco products at some point in their lives.
- Nearly 10% of PA public middle school students have used smokeless tobacco products at some point in their lives.
- 15% of current users of smokeless tobacco in PA public high schools used before age 11.
- 48% of current users of smokeless tobacco in PA public middle schools used before age 11.
- More than 48% of current users in PA public high schools have at least one smokeless tobacco user among their four closest friends.
- More than 43% of current users in PA public middle schools have at least one smokeless tobacco user among their four closest friends.
- About 7% of PA adults used smokeless tobacco in the past month.
- Compared to teens at PA drug-free schools, teens at PA drug-infested schools are four times likelier to smoke cigarettes (23% vs. 5%).
- Compared to popular teens at PA drug-free schools, teens who attend drug-infested schools are four and a half times likelier to smoke (26% vs. six percent).
- PA teens (24%) identify the most important problem they face at their age as drugs, including alcohol and tobacco. Parents (45%) identify social pressures as their teens' biggest concern. Only 11% of parents identify drugs, including alcohol and tobacco, as their teens' biggest concern.
- Of the PA teens considered high risk (15%) for alcohol, tobacco and other drug use, 28% have smoked in the past 30 days.
- Of the PA teens considered at moderate risk (41%) for alcohol, tobacco and other drug use, 98% did not have a cigarette in the past 30 days.
- Of the PA teens considered at low risk (44%) for alcohol, tobacco and other drug use, less than 1% have smoked in the past 30 days.
- 20% of PA parents say they are most concerned about exposure to the use of drugs (12%), irresponsible drinking (7%) and cigarette smoking (1%).

CASA National Survey of American Attitudes on Substance Abuse XII: Teens and Parents, August 2007
Conducted by QEV Analytics, Ltd.

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