

Youth and Tobacco

FACT SHEET



Youth

The youth measure of current smoking is having one or more cigarettes in the past month.

National Facts and Trends

- In general, tobacco use has decreased every year since 1997 from 36.4% to 20.0% in 2007.¹
- Currently 20% of high school students in the US smoke.² This is down from the 23% reported in 2005.³
- In 2007, 13.6% of high school students reported to be currently smoking cigars. 7.8% of those students were female and 19.4% of those students were male.²
- Nearly 75% of youth smokers have seriously thought about quitting, and 56% of high school and 50% of college smokers have tried to quit in the past year. Most of those who have tried have failed.⁴
- Most smokers first use tobacco between the ages of 11 and 13, with only 10%–15% starting after age 19.⁵

Maine Facts and Trends

- Currently the smoking rate for high school students is 14%, down from 16.2% in 2005 and a drop of 64% since 1997 when the rate hit a high of 39.2%.⁶
- High school boys currently smoke at a rate of 13.3% and girls at a rate of 14.7%.²
- Middle school current smoking rate is 5.7%, a drop of 73% since 1997 when the rate was 21%. In 2005 the rate was 7.5%. Middle school girls' rate is 5.8%, boys' 5.7%.⁷
- Of high school students, 10% smoked before the age of 13, a 67% decline from 1997 when the rate was 30%.⁷
- Of middle school students, 5% smoked before the age of 11, a 67% decline since 1997 when the rate was 15%.⁷
- Youth smokers are almost twice as likely as nonsmokers to live with a smoker.⁸
- Seventy-two percent of middle school smokers and 60% of high school smokers live with smokers, compared to 40% of middle school nonsmokers and 36% of high school nonsmokers who report living with smokers.⁸
- 27,000 kids, now under age 18, will die prematurely from smoking.⁹
- Use of other tobacco products by high school students: chewing tobacco (snuff or dip), 6.2%—for boys the rate is 9.2%. High school students using cigars, cigarillos, or little cigars in the past 30 days is 13.8%—19.3% of high school boys smoked at least one cigar in the past 30 days, compared to 7.8% of girls.¹

The Story Behind the Facts: Why Is this Information Important

- Adolescence and young adulthood are times of experimentation and transition in many behaviors, including smoking.¹⁰
- Tobacco use is the leading cause of preventable death globally, contributing to more than 5 million deaths every year.¹¹
- Cigarette smoking by young people leads to immediate and serious health problems, including respiratory and non-respiratory effects, addiction to nicotine, and the associated risk of other drug use.^{12, 13}
- Nicotine is typically the first substance of abuse youth encounter, and adolescents who use tobacco are 15 times more likely to progress to alcohol and other drug use than those who abstain from tobacco.¹⁴

References:

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- ² US Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance—United States, 2007, Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, June 6, 2008, Vol. 57, (SS-4), http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/yrbs/pdf/yrbs07_mmwr.pdf.
- ³ US Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Healthy Youth!. Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS) Youth Online: Comprehensive Results, <http://apps.nccd.cdc.gov/yrbs/index.asp>.
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- ⁵ U.S. CDC. "Trends in the Prevalence of Cigarette Use." http://cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/yrbs/pdf/yrbs07_us_tobacco_use_trend.pdf.
- ⁶ US Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Healthy Youth! YRBSS – Youth Online: Comprehensive Results, <http://apps.nccd.cdc.gov/yrbs/SelQuestyear.asp?cat=2&desc=Tobacco%20Use&loc=ME>.
- ⁷ Youth Risks Behavior Survey 2007 (Maine). <http://www.maineceph.com/survey.html>.
- ⁸ Maine Youth Tobacco Survey 2001, 2004.
- ⁹ Tobacco Free Kids, The Toll of Tobacco in Maine, <http://tobaccofreekids.org/reports/settlements/toll.php?StateID=ME>.
- ¹⁰ Husten, C.G. Smoking Cessation in Young Adults, *American Journal of Public Health*, August 2007; 97(8); 1354-1356.
- ¹¹ World Health Organization, <http://www.who.int/tobacco/communications/events/wntd/2006/statement/en/index.html>.
- ¹² US Center for Chronic Disease and Prevention (CDC). *Preventing Tobacco Use Among Young People, A Report of the Surgeon General*, 1994, http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/sgr/sgr_1994/index.htm.
- ¹³ US Center for Chronic Disease and Prevention (CDC). *The Health Consequences of Smoking, A Report of the Surgeon General*, 2004, http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/sgr/sgr_2004/index.htm.
- ¹⁴ American Academy of Pediatrics Committee on Substance Abuse. "Tobacco's Toll: Implications for the Pediatrician." *Pediatrics* (2001) 107: 794–98.



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