



Burden of Cigarette Use in the U.S.

Current Cigarette Smoking Among U.S. Adults Aged 18 Years and Older

[By Sex](#) | [By Age Group](#) | [By Race/Ethnicity](#) | [By U.S. Census Region](#) | [By Education](#) | [By Marital Status](#) | [By Annual Household Income](#) | [By Sexual Orientation](#) | [By Health Insurance Coverage](#) | [By Disability/Limitation](#) | [By Serious Psychological Distress](#)

Tobacco use remains the single largest preventable cause of death and disease in the United States. Cigarette smoking kills more than 480,000 Americans each year.¹ In addition, smoking-related illness in the United States costs more than \$300 billion a year, including nearly \$170 billion in direct medical care for adults and \$156 billion in lost productivity.^{1,2}

In 2018, an estimated 13.7% (34.2 million) of U.S. adults were current cigarette smokers. Of these, 74.6% smoked every day.³

Percentage of adults aged ≥18 years who reported cigarette use “every day” or “some days,” by selected characteristics — National Health Interview Survey, United States, 2018³

By Sex	Percentage
Male	15.6%
Female	12.0%

By Age Group (yrs)	Percentage
18–24	7.8%
25–44	16.5%
45–64	16.3%
≥65	8.4%

By Race/Ethnicity	Percentage
White, non-Hispanic	15.0%
Black, non-Hispanic	14.6%
Asian, non-Hispanic	7.1%

By Race/Ethnicity	Percentage
American Indian/Alaska Native, non-Hispanic	22.6%
Hispanic	9.8%
Multirace, non-Hispanic	19.1%

By U.S. Census Region	Percentage
Northeast	12.5%
Midwest	16.2%
South	14.8%
West	10.7%

By Education (adults aged ≥25 yrs)	Percentage
0–12 yrs (no diploma)	21.8%
GED	36.0%
High school diploma	19.7%
Some college, no degree	18.3%
Associate degree (academic or technical/vocational)	14.8%
Undergraduate degree (bachelor's)	7.1%
Graduate degree (Master's, doctoral or professional)	3.7%

By Marital Status	Percentage
Married/Living with partner	12.5%
Divorced/Separated/Widowed	18.1%
Single/Never married/Not living with partner	13.9%

By Annual Household Income	Percentage
<35,000	21.3%
35,000–74,999	14.9%
75,000–99,999	13.3%
≥100,000	7.3%

By Sexual Orientation	Percentage
Heterosexual/Straight	13.5%
Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual	20.6%

By Health Insurance Coverage	Percentage
Private insurance	10.5%
Medicaid	23.9%
Medicare only (aged ≥65 yrs)	9.4%
Other public insurance	17.4%
Uninsured	23.9%

By Disability/Limitation	Percentage
Yes	19.2%
No	13.1%

By Serious Psychological Distress	Percentage
Yes	31.6%
No	13.0%

Current cigarette smokers were defined as persons who had smoked ≥100 cigarettes during their lifetime and now smoked cigarettes either every day or some days.

Current Cigarette Smoking Among Specific Populations— United States

[American Indians/Alaska Natives](#) | [Asians](#) | [Blacks](#) | [Hispanics](#) | [Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender \(LGBT\)](#) | [Military](#) | [Pregnant or Planning for a Baby](#) | [People Living With HIV](#) | [Mental Health Conditions](#) | [Adults With Disabilities](#)

American Indians/Alaska Natives (Non-Hispanic)

American Indians/Alaska Natives (AI/ANs) have a higher prevalence of current smoking than most other racial/ethnic groups in the United States.³ Factors that may affect smoking prevalence include sacred tobacco’s ceremonial, religious, and medicinal roles in Native culture, which may affect attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors toward commercial tobacco use.⁴ Also, tobacco sold on tribal lands is typically not subject to state and national taxes, which reduces costs. Lower prices are connected with increased smoking rates.¹

- In 2018, 22.6% of AI/AN adults in the United States smoked cigarettes, compared with 13.7% of U.S. adults overall.³

Asians (Non-Hispanic)

Asian Americans represent a wide variety of languages, dialects, and cultures.⁵ While non-Hispanic Asian adults have the lowest current cigarette smoking prevalence of any racial/ethnic group in the United States, there are significant differences in smoking prevalence among subgroups in this population.⁵ Many Asian Americans emigrate from countries where smoking prevalence is high and smoking among men is the social norm. However, research also shows an association between cigarette smoking and acculturation among Asian Americans, with those having higher English-language proficiency and those living in the United States longer being less likely to smoke.⁴

- In 2018, 7.1% of non-Hispanic Asian adults in the United States smoked cigarettes, compared with 13.7% of U.S. adults overall.³

Among Asian adult subpopulations in the U.S., current smoking prevalence is higher among Korean and Vietnamese respondents compared with Filipino, Japanese, Asian Indian, and Chinese respondents.⁵ Among women, smoking prevalence is highest among Koreans and lowest among Chinese. Among men, smoking prevalence is highest among Vietnamese and lowest among Asian Indians.⁵

Blacks (Non-Hispanic)

Although prevalence of cigarette smoking is lower among non-Hispanic Black high school students than among U.S. high school students overall (3.2% compared with 8.1% in 2018⁶, respectively), smoking prevalence among non-Hispanic Black adults is similar to the overall adult population.^{3,6}

- In 2018, 14.6% of non-Hispanic Black adults in the United States smoked cigarettes, compared with 13.7% of U.S. adults overall.³
- Current smoking prevalence among non-Hispanic Blacks declined from 21.5% in 2005 to 14.6% in 2018.^{1,3}

Hispanics

The prevalence of cigarette smoking among Hispanics is generally lower than the prevalence among other racial/ethnic groups in the United States, with the exception of non-Hispanic Asians. However, smoking prevalence among Hispanic men is significantly higher than among Hispanic women, and there are significant differences in smoking prevalence among subgroups in this population.^{3,5} Research also shows that acculturation plays a role and that smoking prevalence is higher among Hispanics who were born in the United States.⁷

- In 2018, 9.8% of Hispanic adults in the United States smoked cigarettes, compared with 13.7% among U.S. adults overall.³
- Current smoking prevalence among Hispanics declined from 16.2% in 2005 to 9.8% in 2018.^{1,3}

Among Hispanic adult subpopulations in the U.S., current smoking prevalence is higher among Puerto Rican adults compared with Cuban, Mexican, and Central or South American adults.⁵

Among both men and women, smoking prevalence is highest among Puerto Ricans, and lowest among Central or South Americans.⁵

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT)

Smoking prevalence among lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) individuals in the United States is higher than among heterosexual/straight individuals.^{3,8} This may be in part due to the aggressive marketing of tobacco products to this community. LGBT individuals also are likely to have risk factors for smoking that include daily stress related to prejudice and stigma that they can face.⁹

- In 2018, the prevalence of current cigarette smoking among lesbian, gay, and bisexual adults was 20.6%, compared with 13.5% among adult heterosexual/straight adults.³

Military Service Members and Veterans

In the United States, cigarette smoking prevalence is higher among people currently serving in the military than among the civilian population.^{10,11} Cigarette smoking prevalence is even higher among military personnel who have been deployed.¹⁰

- Among military veterans, 29.2% of veterans reported current tobacco product use.¹²
- Cigarettes were the most commonly used tobacco product among veterans, at 21.6%.¹²

The high prevalence of tobacco use among military and veteran personnel has a significant financial impact. During 2010, the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) spent an estimated \$2.7 billion on smoking-related ambulatory care, prescription drugs, hospitalization, and home health care.¹²

Women Who Are Pregnant or Planning to Become Pregnant

Overall, there have been slight decreases in cigarette smoking during pregnancy and after delivery between 2000 and 2010, but for the majority of states, smoking prevalence before, during, or after pregnancy did not change over time, according to a study using Pregnancy Risk Assessment and Monitoring Survey (PRAMS) data.¹³

In 2010, data from 27 PRAMS sites, representing 52% of live births, showed that among women with recent live births:¹³

- About 23% reported smoking in the 3 months prior to pregnancy.
 - More than half of these smokers (54%) reported that they quit smoking by the last 3 months of pregnancy.
- Almost 11% reported smoking during the last 3 months of pregnancy.
- Almost 16% reported smoking after delivery.

Among racial and ethnic groups, smoking during pregnancy was highest among AI/ANs (26.0%) and lowest among Asians/Pacific Islanders (2.1%).¹³

The highest prevalence of smoking after delivery was reported in women aged 20–24 years (25.5%), AI/ANs (40.1%), those who had less than 12 years of education (24.5%), and those who had Medicaid coverage during pregnancy or delivery (24.3%).¹³

The cigarette smoking rates of women who smoked before, during and after pregnancy¹³

Smoking Status—Women With Recent Live Births, 2010	Prevalence*
Smoked before pregnancy	23.2% [†]
Smoked during pregnancy	10.7%
Smoked after delivery	15.9%

People Living With HIV

Cigarette smoking prevalence is estimated to be at least two times higher among adults living with HIV than in the general population.^{14,15,16} Advances in science mean that HIV is now a chronic, manageable disease. Many people with HIV lead healthy lives. However, smoking has serious health effects on people with HIV, including higher risks for cancer, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), heart disease, stroke, and HIV-related infections, including bacterial pneumonia.¹⁴

- In 2014, among adults with HIV, 37.9% were current cigarette smokers.¹⁷
- Factors associated with higher smoking prevalence among adults with HIV include:¹⁶
 - Race/ethnicity: Non-Hispanic Whites and non-Hispanic Blacks are more likely to smoke than Hispanics and Latinos.
 - Education: Persons who only achieved a high school education or less are more likely to smoke than those with more than a high school education.
 - Poverty level: Persons living below the poverty level are more likely to smoke than those living at or above the poverty level.

People With Mental Health Conditions

Approximately 1 in 4 (or 25%) of adults in the U.S. have some form of mental illness or substance use disorder, and these adults consume almost 40% of all cigarettes smoked by adults overall.¹⁸

- In 2016, 28% of adults with any mental illness reported current use of cigarettes compared to 18.4% of adults with no mental illness.¹⁹

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration’s National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH) defines mental illness as any diagnosable mental, behavioral, or emotional disorder and defines substance use disorder as dependence or abuse of alcohol or illicit drugs.²⁰

Adults With Disabilities

Adults with disabilities are more likely to be cigarette smokers than those without disabilities. This might be because a smoker's disability is the result of smoking or because of possible higher stress associated with disabilities.³

- In 2018, the prevalence of current cigarette smoking among adults with disabilities was 19.2% compared with 13.1% among adults with no disability.³

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