

National Prevalence and Trends

Adults

- Among Hispanic adults, 12.5% smoke cigarettes. There are substantial differences in smoking rates by gender; 15.8% of Hispanic men smoke, while 9.0% of Hispanic women smoke.¹
- Smoking among Hispanic individuals significantly declined between 2005 and 2010 from 16.2% to 12.5%, indicating changes in smoking habits within the Hispanic population.¹
- The overall smoking rate among Hispanics is lower than the rates among American Indians and Alaska Natives (31.4%), whites (21.0%) and African Americans (20.6%), but higher than among Asian Americans (9.2%).¹
- Overall, compared to white smokers, Hispanic smokers tend to be non-daily or light and intermittent smokers.^{2,3}
- However, disparities in smoking prevalence exist among Hispanic subgroups and also by gender within these groups.^{4,5}

Percentage of Hispanic adults reporting cigarette use during the preceding month in the United States by subgroup, 1999-2001 ⁶

ADULTS	Total	Male	Female
Mexican	22.8%	29.8%	15.6%
Puerto Rican	30.4%	34.2%	27.3%
Cuban	19.2%	21.1%	17.5%
Central or South American	21.3%	26.3%	16.9%

- Those who identify themselves as Mexican-American have higher cigarette use than those living in the United States who identify themselves as Mexicans. While cigarette smoking may be as common among Mexican-American and Mexican males living in the United States as it is among white males, smoking rates among Mexican-American women and Mexican women living in the United States are much lower than white women.⁷

- A review of studies found that increased smoking prevalence was observed with increased acculturation among Hispanic women but not for Hispanic men.⁸
- About one-third of Hispanic or Latino smokers over age twelve use menthol cigarettes. Eighty-three percent (83%) of African American smokers, 31% of Asian American smokers and 24% of white smokers smoke menthol cigarettes.⁹
- Latinos and Hispanics are of very blended ancestries and share genes from indigenous American, European and African peoples. Therefore, it is difficult to determine if there are genetic predispositions towards nicotine addiction and rates of nicotine absorption related to disparities in tobacco-related disease.¹⁰

Youth

- Just over nineteen percent (19.2%) of Hispanic high school students smoke while about seven percent (6.7%) of Hispanic middle school students grades 6-8 smoke.¹
- Hispanic and white high school students smoke cigarettes at about the same rate (19.2% and 19.4% respectively) compared to about ten percent (9.7%) of Asian American and about seven percent (7.4%) of African American high school students.¹¹

Percentage of Hispanic youth ages 12-17 who had smoked one or more cigarettes in the preceding month in the United States by subgroup, 2002-2004¹²

YOUTH	Total	Male	Female
Mexican	9.0%	9.7%	8.2%
Puerto Rican	11.1%	9.2%	13.4%
Cuban	11.2%	-	12.2%
Central or South American	9.6%	6.1%	8.6%

- Hispanic youth are more likely than other youth to be protected from secondhand smoke by smoking bans in the home. Seventy-eight percent (78%) of all Hispanic households do not allow smoking in the home.¹³

Health Impact

- **Cardiovascular Disease**—Cardiovascular disease is the primary cause of death in the United States and among Hispanics. Heart disease and stroke together accounted for nearly 30% of all deaths among Hispanics in 2007.¹⁴ It is estimated that as many as 30% of deaths in the overall population from cardiovascular disease are a result of tobacco use.¹⁴
- **Heart Disease**—In 2007, heart disease killed more than 29,000 Hispanics.¹⁴ Smoking is a major cause of heart disease.¹⁵
- **Stroke**—Stroke is the third leading cause of death in the United State and fourth among Hispanics. In 2007, over 7,000 Hispanics died of stroke. Smoking increases the risk for stroke.¹⁶
- **Heart Attack**—In 2007, about 3,000 Hispanic women and nearly 3,800 men died from heart attack.¹⁴ Smokers are at greater risk than nonsmokers for heart attack.¹⁶
- **Cancer**—Cancer is the second leading cause of death in the U.S. and among Hispanics. Almost one in five Hispanic deaths is attributable to cancer. Over 27,000 Hispanics died of cancer in 2007.¹⁴ Cigarette smoking is a major cause of cancer.¹⁷
- **Lung Cancer**—In 2007, 1,800 Hispanic women and almost 3,000 Hispanic men died of lung cancer.¹⁴ Cigarette smoking is overwhelmingly the primary cause of lung cancer.¹⁷

Quitting Smoking

- Studies show that Hispanic smokers are less likely than white smokers to be prescribed nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) from physicians.^{3,18} Yet, awareness of NRT resources is positively associated with smoking cessation and quit attempts among Hispanics.¹⁹
- When controlling for socioeconomic status (SES), researchers found no differences in quit success by race and ethnicity; when controlling for education, researchers found that Hispanics were more likely to quit smoking than whites.²⁰
- High rates of complete smoke free housing may aide in quit attempts among Hispanics. Hispanic households with daily smokers are more likely to have a complete smoking ban (54.5%), than non-Hispanic white households (35.0%), and African American households (23.9%).¹⁸

Other Studies

- In a study of smokers in Colorado, more Hispanic smokers (71.5%) made quit attempts in comparison with 61.1% of white smokers. Moreover, Hispanic smokers were less than half as likely (10.6% versus 24.8% for white smokers) to use quit-smoking medication as part of their cessation plan.^{3,21}
- In a study of Latino smokers in California, researchers found that as many as 70% of California Latino smokers are non-daily or intermittent smokers. Thus, the authors recommend that emphasizing social forces (such as the social undesirability of smoking, and protecting children and family from second hand smoke) might be persuasive in cessation and deterring smoking among Latinos in California.^{22,23}
- Smaller studies and focus groups have found that social support is extremely important to the success of quit attempts in Latino smokers, especially support from one's significant other. Additionally, social support among Latinos seems to buffer against depression which is negatively associated with quit attempts.^{24,25}

SOURCES

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