

First Use of Cigarettes

- Nearly 80% of smokers try their first cigarette before age 18 and nearly 90% begin before age 20.¹
- Almost three quarters (73%) of youth smokers begin smoking before age 14.²
- Each day in the United States, about 4,100 young people between ages 12 and 17 try smoking for the first time.³
- Every day, about 1,100 young people in the United States become daily cigarette smokers.³
- Within days or weeks of first cigarette use, symptoms of nicotine dependence may appear among adolescents.⁴

National Prevalence and Trends

High School

- In 2009, 17.2% of high school students were current smokers.⁵
- Among high school students, 14.8% of young women and 19.6% of young men smoke cigarettes.⁵
- Nineteen percent (19.4%) of white high school students smoke compared to 19.2% of Hispanic students, 9.7% of Asian students and 7.4% of black high school students.¹
- Smoking among high school youth is at its lowest point in recent history and has been declining since 1997 when it peaked at 36.4%. However, the rate of this decline has slowed between 2003 and 2009.⁶
- Youth smoking prevalence increases with grade level: 13.5% of 9th graders, 18.3% of 10th graders, 22.3% of 11th graders, and 25.2% of 12th graders smoke.⁶

Middle School

- In 2009, 5.2% of middle school students were smokers.⁵
- Among middle school students, 4.7% of girls and 5.6% of boys smoke cigarettes.⁵
- Seven percent (6.7)% of Hispanic, 5.2% of black, 4.3%, of white, and 2.5% of Asian middle school students are smokers.⁵
- Twenty-one percent (21.2%) of middle school students are susceptible to trying cigarettes, a figure which has remained unchanged since 2006.⁵

Cigarette Preferences

- The top three cigarette brands used by youth, in order of preference, are Marlboro, Newport, and Camel.⁷
- Half of high school smokers and 54% of middle school smokers smoke menthol cigarettes.²

Other Tobacco Products

- Among both middle school and high school students, boys are significantly more likely than girls to use tobacco products other than cigarettes such as cigars and smokeless tobacco.⁸

High School

- Twenty four percent (23.9%) of high school students report using any form of tobacco. After cigarettes, the most commonly used tobacco products are cigars (10.9%) and smokeless tobacco (6.7%).⁵
- In high school, 15.0% of young men smoke cigars compared with 6.7% of young women.⁵
- In high school, 11.6% of young men use smokeless tobacco compared to 1.8% of young women.⁵

Middle School

- Eight percent (8.2%) of middle school students report using any form of tobacco.⁵

Smoking Cessation Among High School Students

- Among high school smokers, just over half (50.8%) have attempted to quit smoking.⁹
- More young women try to quit than young men (54.2% and 48.0% respectively).⁹

Obtaining Cigarettes And Use On School Property

- Among high school student smokers under age 18, 14.1% bought their cigarettes in a store (i.e., convenience store, supermarket, or discount store) or a gas station.⁹
- More smokers under age 18 in 12th grade bought their cigarettes in a store or gas station (23.9%) compared to students in 11th grade (15.8%), 10th grade (13.4%) and 9th grade (7.1%).⁹
- Students who smoked cigarettes on school property decreased from 16.5% to 5.1% during 1995-2009.⁹

SOURCES

¹ Calculated based on data from the 2008 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH). Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), Office of Applied Studies. (2009).

² Calculated based on data from the 2009 National Youth Tobacco Survey (NYTS). CDC, Office on Smoking and Health, 2010.

³ Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. Results from the 2009 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: Volume I. Summary of National Findings (Office of Applied Studies, NSDUH Series H-38A, HHS Publication No. SMA 10-4586Findings). Rockville, MD; 2010.

⁴ DiFranza JR, Rigotti NA, McNeill AD, Ockene JK, Savageau JA, St CD, et al. Initial symptoms of nicotine dependence in adolescents. *Tob Control* 2000;9(3):313-319.

⁵ CDC. Tobacco Use Among Middle and High School Students - United States, 2000-2009. *MMWR* 2010;59(33):1063-8.

⁶ CDC. Cigarette Use Among High School Students - United States, 1991-2009. *MMWR* 2010;59(26):797-801.

⁷ CDC. Cigarette Brand Preference Among Middle and High School Students Who Are Established Smokers--United States, 2004 and 2006. *MMWR* 2009;58(05):112-115.

⁸ American Legacy Foundation. *Beyond Cigarettes: The Use Of Other Tobacco Products*. Washington: American Legacy Foundation; 2005.

⁹ CDC. Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance - United States, 2009. *MMWR* 2010;59(SS-5):1-148.