

Tobacco-Free Youth and Young Adults

Tobacco use and subsequent addiction most frequently take root in adolescence. Preventing tobacco use among youth is critical to ensuring healthy adults because tobacco use and subsequent addiction most frequently take root in adolescence. According to the *Toll of Tobacco in the United States of America* data (2008), 20% or more than 45 million adults in the United States smoke. 400,000 adults die annually from their own smoke while between 26,100 and 73,000 non-smokers die from exposure to second-hand smoke.

Tennessee Data

The Toll of Tobacco in Tennessee data shows that every year, 9,400 Tennessee youth under 18 years of age become daily smokers (2008). At this rate, 132,000 Tennessee youth under 18 alive today will die an early, preventable death because of a decision made as a child. Also, 488,000 youth are exposed to secondhand smoke at home and 19.3 million packs of cigarettes are bought or smoked by Tennessee youth each year. Smoking kills more people than alcohol, AIDS, car crashes, illegal drugs, murders, and suicides combined, and thousands more die from other tobacco-related causes such as fires caused by smoking (more than 1,000 deaths/year nationwide) and smokeless tobacco use.

The CDC YRBSS 2007 shows that Tennessee has experienced a decline in youth tobacco use, however, Tennessee continues to be above the national average in most categories of tobacco usage.

- A 20.3% decline in cigarette use among Tennessee adolescents was noted from 1993 (74.9%) to 2007 (54.6%). However, this is still higher than the national average of 50.3%.
- White males are most likely to try smoking (59.0%) compared to white females (54.8%), African-American males (47.1%) and African-American females (42.4%).
- The proportion of young people younger than 13 who smoked a whole cigarette decreased significantly from 1993 (34.9%) to 2007 (17.9%).
- Current cigarette use, as defined by one or more cigarettes smoked within the past 30 days, declined among Tennessee high school students from 1993 (32%) to 2005 (25.5%). In 2007 the national average was 20%.
- Eighteen percent of white males in high school have used chewing tobacco snuff or dip at least once in the 30 days prior to the survey compared to 2.0% of African-American males. White females used smokeless tobacco during the same time at a rate 2.5% compared to 0.5% for African-American females. The national rate was 7.9%.

- Even though Tennessee has a tobacco-free schools law (Children’s Clean Indoor Air Act of 1994), 2007 data show that 7.6% of Tennessee high school students smoked cigarettes on school property during the past 30 days.
- According to the 2000 Tennessee Youth Tobacco Survey, 23.4% of all middle school students (6th, 7th and 8th grades) currently use some kind of tobacco product compared to 15.1% nationally. Also, 16.6% of Tennessee middle school students currently smoke cigarettes compared to 11% nationally.
(Tennessee middle school data are representative of all public middle schools in Tennessee except for Memphis/Shelby County.)

According to results from the 2007 Tennessee Youth Risk Behavior Survey, high school students obtained cigarettes from:

- 7.0% indicated someone else bought them cigarettes
- 7.0% at store or gas station
- 5.3% borrowed or bummed them
- 2.3% a person 18 or older
- 2.5% some other way
- 1.4% took them from store/family
- 0.4% vending machine

Best Practices

- Parents – Ninety percent of adult smokers start smoking by the age of 18. Parents can give children specific facts about the effects of tobacco on health; discuss the subject of smoking when it appears on TV, in newspapers or in advertisements in magazines; focus on peer pressure and specific ways to deal with it; let children and youth know that smoking is unacceptable behavior and model good habits by not using tobacco or trying to quit.
- Schools – School personnel should not allow tobacco use on school grounds. The Children’s Clean Indoor Air Act of 1994, passed by the Tennessee legislature, requires school districts to institute policies banning tobacco use. Assistance is available through the Tennessee Department of Health to all Tennessee schools and colleges interested in implementing tobacco prevention programs.
- Community – Programs like The National Cancer Institute’s ASSIST (American Stop Smoking Intervention Study) Project have demonstrated that community-based programs reduce tobacco use. Because community involvement is essential to reducing tobacco use, a portion of the tobacco control funding should be provided to local government entities, community organizations, local businesses, and other community partners.

2010 Objectives

Reduce Use of Chewing Tobacco or Snuff

- By 2010, reduce the proportion of high school students who used chewing tobacco or snuff on one or more of the previous 30 days to 9.1%, from the 2003 baseline of 14%.

Reduce Use of Tobacco

- By 2010, reduce tobacco use among high school students (those who smoked cigarettes on one or more of the previous 30 days) to 21%, from the 2005 baseline of 26.3%.

Websites

Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids
www.tobaccofreekids.org

CDC YRBSS Youth Online: Comprehensive Results, 2007
<http://apps.nccd.cdc.gov/yrbss/>

National Center for Tobacco-Free Kids
www.tobaccofreekids.org

Not on Tobacco: A Total Health Approach to Helping Teens
Stop Smoking
American Lung Association
www.lungusa.org/school/not_teens.html

Office on Smoking and Health
www.cdc.gov/tobacco

Tennessee Department of Health
Tobacco Use Prevention and Control Program
<http://www2.tennessee.gov/health/healthpromotion/index.html#Tobacco%20Control>

Tennessee Youth Risk Behavior Survey
http://tennessee.gov/education/yrbs/07/07_detail_tables.pdf

Toll of Tobacco in Tennessee
<http://www.tobaccofreekids.org/reports/settlements/toll.php?StateID=TN>

Toll of Tobacco in the United States of America
<http://www.tobaccofreekids.org/research/factsheets/pdf/0072.pdf>