Hispanics and Smoking

NATIONAL PREVALENCE AND TRENDS

Adults

- Sixteen percent (16%) of all Hispanic adults smoke. There are substantial differences in smoking rates by gender; 21% of Hispanic men smoke, while 11% of Hispanic women smoke.¹
- The overall smoking rate among Hispanics is lower than the rates among American Indians (32%), Whites (22%) and African Americans (22%), but higher than among Asian Americans (13%).³
- While cigarette smoking may be as common among Mexican-American and Mexican males living in the U.S. as it is among non-Hispanic White males, smoking rates among Mexican-American and Mexican women are much lower. Moreover, those who identify themselves as Mexican-American have higher cigarette use than those who identify themselves as Mexicans.²
- Hispanic smokers are more likely than White smokers to attempt cessation, but less likely to receive cessation advice from physicians or to use nicotine replacement therapy.³
- Forty-three percent (43%) of Hispanics who have ever smoked have quit, compared with 37% of African Americans, 41% of American Indians, 45% of Asians and 51% of Whites.⁴

Youth

- Over nine percent (9%) of Hispanic middle school students and 22% of Hispanic high school students smoke.⁵
- In high school, 22% of high school Hispanics smoke, compared with 25% of Whites, 11% of African Americans, and 11% of Asian Americans.⁵
- Hispanic youth are more likely than other youth to be protected from secondhand smoke by smoking bans in the home. Seventy-one percent (71%) of all Hispanic households do not allow smoking in the home.⁶

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 one-third of all deaths among Hispanics in 2002.⁷ It is estimated that as many as 30% of deaths from cardiovascular disease are a result of tobacco use.⁸
- **Heart Disease**—In 2002, heart disease killed more than 27,000 Hispanics.⁷ Smoking is a major cause of heart disease.⁷
- **Stroke**—Stroke is the third leading cause of death in the U.S. and fourth among Hispanics. In 2002, nearly 6,500 Hispanics died of stroke.⁷ Smoking increases the risk for stroke.¹⁰
- **Heart Attack**—In 2002, about 3,000 Hispanic women and nearly 4,000 men died from heart attack.¹¹ Smokers are at greater risk than nonsmokers for heart attack.¹²
• **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 20,000 Hispanics died of cancer in 2002.\(^7\) Cigarette smoking is a major cause of cancer.\(^10\)

• **Lung Cancer**
  - In 2000, about 1,000 Hispanic women and 2,000 Hispanic men died of lung cancer.\(^9\) Cigarette smoking is overwhelmingly the most important cause of lung cancer.\(^13\)
  - Hispanic men have the lowest death rates for lung cancer among men. Lung cancer death rates for Hispanic men are less than half what they are for all men, and less than one third what they are for African American men.\(^14\)
  - Hispanic women have the lowest death rates for lung cancer. Lung cancer death rates for Hispanic women are less than one third what they are for all women, and continue to decline.\(^14\)

**TOBACCO PREFERENCES**

**Light Cigarettes**

• Seven percent (7%) of Hispanic adults smoke light cigarettes compared to 80% of Whites and 8% African Americans.\(^15\)

• Thirty percent (30%) of Hispanic smokers in middle school smoke light cigarettes compared with 32% of White, 22% of African American, and 18% of Asian smokers in middle school. In high school, 35% of Hispanic youth smoke light cigarettes compared with 66% of White, 14% of African American, and 36% Asian American smokers in high school.\(^16\)

**Menthol Cigarettes**

• Nearly half of Hispanic smokers in high school (47%) usually smoke menthol cigarettes. Menthol cigarettes are also preferred by 76% of African American smokers, 62% of Asian American smokers and 29% of White smokers.\(^17\)

**REFERENCES**

5. CDC. Tobacco Use, Access, and Exposure to Tobacco in Media Among Middle and High School Students - United States, 2004, MMWR 2005; 54(12): 297-301.
Building a world where young people reject tobacco and anyone can quit.