

# Youth and Tobacco Use: Current Estimates

## Cigarette Smoking

- 22.9% of high school students in the United States are current cigarette smokers.<sup>1</sup> Estimates are slightly higher for males (24.6%) than for females (21.2%).<sup>1</sup>
- 25.5% of whites, 20.5% of Hispanics, 14.3% of African Americans, and 12.8% of Asian Americans in high school are current cigarette smokers.<sup>1</sup>
- 10.1% of middle school students in this country are current cigarette smokers,<sup>1</sup> with estimates similar for males (10.2%) and females (10.0%).<sup>1</sup>
- 10.4% of whites, 9.4% of African Americans, 9.1% of Hispanics, and 7.4% of Asian Americans in middle school are current cigarette smokers.<sup>1</sup>
- Each day, nearly 4,400 young people between the ages of 12 and 17 years initiate cigarette smoking in the United States.<sup>2</sup> In this age group, each day an estimated 2,000 young people become daily cigarette smokers in this country.<sup>2</sup>

## State Estimates

- 11.6% of high school students are current cigar smokers, with estimates higher for males (16.9%) than for females (6.2%).<sup>1</sup> Nationally, an estimated 6.0% of all middle school students are current cigar smokers, with estimates of 7.9% for males and 4.1% for females.<sup>1</sup>
- An estimated 10.8% of males in high school are current smokeless tobacco users,<sup>1</sup> as are an estimated 5.6% of males in middle school.<sup>1</sup>
- An estimated 2.6% of high school students are current users of bidis; bidi use is more common among males (3.7%) than females (1.5%).<sup>1</sup> An estimated 2.4% of middle school students are bidi users, with estimates of 3.1% for males and 1.7% for females.<sup>1</sup>

## Factors Associated with Tobacco Use among Youth

- Factors associated with youth tobacco use include low socioeconomic status, use and approval of tobacco use by peers or siblings, smoking by parents or guardians, accessibility and availability of tobacco products, a perception that tobacco use is normative, lack of parental support or involvement, low levels of academic achievement, lack of skills to resist influences to tobacco use, lower self-image or self-esteem, belief in functional benefits of tobacco use, and lack of self-efficacy to refuse offers of tobacco.<sup>3,4</sup>
- Tobacco use in adolescence is associated with many other health risk behaviors, including higher risk sexual behavior and use of alcohol or other drugs.<sup>3</sup>

## References

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Tobacco use among middle and high school students-United States, 2002. *MMWR*. 2003;52:1096-1098.
2. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration. *2001 National Household Survey on Drug Abuse: Trends in Initiation of Substance Abuse*. Rockville, MD: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2003. Available at: <http://www.samhsa.gov/oas/NHSDA/2k1NHSDA/vol1/Chapter5.htm>. Date of Access: August 26, 2003.
3. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *Preventing Tobacco Use among Young People: A Report of the Surgeon General*. Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 1994.
4. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *Reducing Tobacco Use: A Report of the Surgeon General*. Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health, 2000.

**Note: Information available as of December 2003;  
next update is scheduled for December 2004.  
More recent estimates may be available at the Office on Smoking and Health  
Web site: <http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco>**

### **For Further Information:**

Office on Smoking and Health  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion  
770-488-5705 • <http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco>

**Media Inquiries: Contact the Office on Smoking and Health's press line at 770-488-5493**

