

## What State Surveys Tell Us About Tobacco Use Among Alaska Natives: Implications for Program Planning

This fact sheet highlights findings related to tobacco use and related attitudes among Alaska Native adults – specifically those between the ages of 18-64. This information is intended to help people who are working to improve the health of Alaska Natives. The information can be used for planning effective programs and educating communities and their leaders about preventing youth from ever starting to use tobacco, helping current users to quit, and decreasing secondhand smoke exposure.

### Adult Tobacco Use

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#### Current Cigarette Smoking

- 42% of Alaska Native adults statewide smoke cigarettes.
- About half of Alaska Native adults ages 18-34 currently smoke cigarettes (48% for 18-24, 50% for 25-34).
- Somewhat fewer older Alaska Native adults smoke cigarettes (45% for 35-44, 42% for 45-54, 33% for 55-64).
- This translates into about 31,200 Alaska Native adult smokers across all age groups.

#### Current Smokeless Tobacco Use

- 11% of Alaska Native adults statewide currently use smokeless tobacco.
- Between 11-15% of Alaska Native adults ages 18-54 currently use smokeless tobacco.
- In contrast, only 1% of adults ages 55 and older use smokeless tobacco.
- This translates into about 7,800 Alaska Native smokeless tobacco users across all adult age groups.

#### Current Iqmik Use

- “Iqmik” is a form of homemade smokeless tobacco used only among Alaska Natives.
- About 3% of Alaska Native adults statewide use Iqmik.
- Between 3-5% of adults ages 18-54 currently use Iqmik; in contrast, less than 1% of adults ages 55 and older use Iqmik.
- This translates into about 2,200 Alaska Native Iqmik users across all adult age groups.

### Tobacco Use During Pregnancy

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#### Cigarette Smoking

- 28% of Alaska Native women statewide smoke cigarettes during the last three months of pregnancy.
- Younger Alaska Native women are more likely than older women to smoke cigarettes during the last three months of pregnancy (33% among women ages 20-24 vs. 19% among women 35 and older).
- About 670 babies per year are born to Alaska Native women who smoke during pregnancy from all age groups.

#### Smokeless Tobacco Use

- 18% of Alaska Native women statewide use smokeless tobacco during pregnancy.
- Older Alaska Native women are somewhat more likely than younger women to use smokeless tobacco during their pregnancy (24% among women 35 and older vs. 15% among women ages 20-24).
- About 430 babies per year are born to Alaska Native women who use smokeless tobacco during pregnancy from all age groups.

### Quitting Tobacco Use

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- The number of Alaska Native adult smokers who tried to quit smoking during the past year increased significantly between 2004 and 2005 (from 56% to 66%).
- Younger Alaska Native adult smokers are more likely than older adults to make quit attempts (76% among 18-24 year olds vs. 47% among 45-54 year olds).
- Younger Alaska Native women who smoke prior to pregnancy are somewhat more likely than older women to quit by the last three months of pregnancy (44% among women under 20 vs. 34% among women 35 and older).
- About half (53%) of Alaska Native women who quit smoking during pregnancy relapse and are smoking again after their babies are born.
- The clear majority (71%) of Alaska Native women who smoke after pregnancy say they want to quit.
- About two-thirds (64%) of Alaska Native adult smokers who visit a healthcare provider are advised to quit.
- About one-third (35%) of Alaska Native adult smokeless tobacco users who visit a healthcare provider are advised to quit.
- Almost half (45%) of Alaska Native adult smokers know about the state’s toll-free tobacco Quitline: 888-842-QUIT (7848).

## Exposure to Secondhand Smoke

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### Smoking Exposure at Home - Adults

- About one in five (16%) Alaska Native adults are exposed to secondhand smoke at home – these numbers are not significantly different by age group.
- This translates into about 11,700 Alaska Native adults exposed at home.
- About one in three (33%) Alaska Native adults are exposed to secondhand smoke in a car.
- Younger Alaska Native adults are more likely than older adults to be exposed to secondhand smoke in cars (48% among adults age 18-24 vs. 20% among adults age 55-64).
- This translates into about 24,400 Alaska Native adults exposed to secondhand smoke in cars.

## Knowledge and Opinions about Tobacco Control

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- About 86% of Alaska Native adults believe it is very important to keep stores from selling tobacco to teens – this is similar for all age groups.
- About 86% of Alaska Native adults agree that tobacco use by adults should be banned on school grounds – this is similar for all age groups.
- About 43% of Alaska Native adults believe that there is little benefit to quitting after smoking for 20 years, which is not true – this was similar for all age groups.
- Younger Alaska Native adults are more likely than older adults to know that secondhand smoke causes all four of these diseases: lung cancer, respiratory problems among children, heart disease and sudden infant death syndrome (66% among 18-24 year olds vs. 38% among 45-54 year olds).
- About 71% of all Alaska Native adults believe that secondhand smoke is “very harmful” – this is not different by age group.
- About 77% of Alaska Native adults support banning smoking in all indoor work areas – this is not different by age group.

## More Information about Planning for Tobacco Control

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This fact sheet includes highlights from the report *What State Surveys Tell Us about Tobacco Use among Alaska Natives: Implications for Program Planning*. The full report contains information about the health burden of tobacco use among Alaska Natives, trends in tobacco use among Alaska Natives in comparison to non-Native Alaskans, and additional detail about tobacco use indicators such as knowledge of harm, quitting, and opinions about tobacco control programs. Findings in the report are translated into recommendations for program planning.

A full copy of the report, an executive summary and additional fact sheets are available online from the Alaska Tobacco Prevention and Control Program: [www.hss.state.ak.us/dph/chronic/tobacco](http://www.hss.state.ak.us/dph/chronic/tobacco)

DATA SOURCES: ADULT TOBACCO USE – ALASKA BEHAVIORAL RISK FACTOR SURVEILLANCE SYSTEM (BRFSS), 2004-05 COMBINED; YOUTH TOBACCO USE – 2003 ALASKA YOUTH RISK BEHAVIOR SURVEY (YRBS); SMOKING DURING PREGNANCY – ALASKA PREGNANCY RISK ASSESSMENT MONITORING SYSTEM (PRAMS), 2000-03 COMBINED

