

N.C. Youth Tobacco Survey - NEWS BRIEF



N.C. Tobacco Prevention and Control Branch – Surveillance and Evaluation Team

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WHO'S STILL SMOKING IN N.C.?



Tobacco continues to be the leading cause of preventable death in the United States and in North Carolina. Each year, about 430,000 Americans die prematurely from smoking-related diseases. That's one in every five deaths in this country and enough people to fill the Carolina Panthers' Bank of America Stadium six times! More than 12,000 North Carolinians die every year and more than 80% of America's smokers start smoking before the age of 18!

Youth smoking continues to haunt North Carolina. In 2003, as measured by the N.C. Youth Tobacco Survey, almost 30% of middle schoolers, (students in grades 6-8), and almost 60% of high schoolers, (grades 9-12), have smoked at least one or two puffs of a cigarette. That means that more high schoolers have tried smoking than play high school sports! What's more, nearly 10% of all middle schoolers and 30% of all high schoolers currently smoke cigarettes.

Smoking is a problem that affects all of North Carolina's students; it does not discriminate based upon gender or ethnicity. Nearly equal numbers of girls (8.9% middle school and 25.7% high school) and boys (9.8% middle school and 28.7% high school) currently smoke cigarettes. Current smoking follows expected patterns by grade level, increasing steadily from 4.1% of 6th graders to 35.4% of 12th graders. Some differences exist between different ethnic groups and smoking prevalence. In middle school, whites (9.1%) are as likely to smoke as blacks (8.8%).

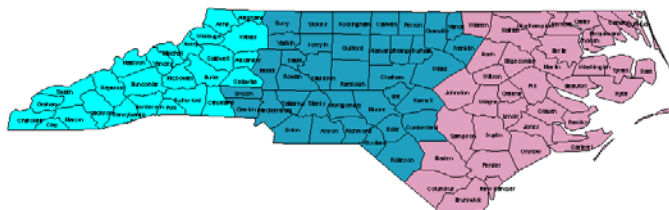
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Lifetime Tobacco Use among High School Students in N.C., 2003



Western counties: 63.6%
Central counties: 58.3%
Eastern counties: 58.8%

Lifetime Tobacco Use among Middle School Students in N.C., 2003



Western counties: 30.4%
Central counties: 28.2%
Eastern counties: 33.4%

THE GREAT AMERICAN SMOKEOUT:

The American Cancer Society (ACS) hosts the 29th annual Great American Smokeout on Thursday, November 17, 2005 to help smokers quit tobacco use for at least 24 hours, with the hope that smokers will then be able to quit completely. Smokers should use the Great American Smokeout as a call to action to see their physicians and use the effective treatments available to help them convert their quit attempt into successful long-term cessation. For the Great American Smokeout, ACS staff and volunteers provide smoking cessation and smoking prevention activities for people of all ages at the local ACS offices. Additional information is available from ACS:

1-800-227-2345 or www.cancer.org

