

## WHAT STATE SURVEYS TELL US ABOUT TOBACCO USE AMONG ALASKA NATIVES: IMPLICATIONS FOR PROGRAM PLANNING

This fact sheet highlights findings related to tobacco use among Alaska Native adults with children in the home – most of whom are parents or parenting. 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

- More than one in five (43%) Alaska Native adults with children in the home currently smoke cigarettes.
- This translates into about 19,200 adult smokers with children in their homes.
- Alaska Native adults with and without children in the home are similarly likely to smoke cigarettes.

#### Current Smokeless Tobacco Use

- More than one in ten (15%) Alaska Native adults with children in the home currently use smokeless tobacco, which is significantly more than for adults without children in the home (4%).
- This translates into about 6,700 adult smokeless tobacco users with children in their homes.
- About 5% of Alaska Native adults with children in the home use Iqmik, a form of homemade smokeless tobacco used only among Alaska Natives; adults without children in the home are less likely to use Iqmik (<1%).

### Youth Tobacco Use

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#### Current Cigarette Smoking

- About 44% of Alaska Native high school students currently smoke cigarettes.
- This translates into about 3,400 high school-aged smokers statewide.

#### Current Smokeless Tobacco Use

- About one in four (24%) Alaska Native high school students currently use smokeless tobacco.
- This translates into about 1,900 high school-aged smokeless tobacco users statewide.

### Tobacco Use During Pregnancy

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#### Cigarette Smoking

- About one in three (28%) Alaska Native women smoke cigarettes during the last three months of pregnancy.
- This translates into about 670 babies per year born to mothers who smoke.

#### Smokeless Tobacco Use

- About one in five (18%) Alaska Native women use smokeless tobacco during their pregnancy.
- This translates into about 430 babies per year born to mothers who use smokeless tobacco.

## Preventing Tobacco Use

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- Most Alaska Native high school students (83%) say they have smoked at least one cigarette in their lives; one-third (34%) say that they smoked a whole cigarette before the age of 13.
- Among Alaska Native high school students who smoke, some report that they usually get cigarettes by taking them from adults or a store (3%), or that adults give them the cigarettes (3%).

## Quitting Tobacco Use

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- About two-thirds (66%) of Alaska Native adult smokers with children in the home say that they tried to quit during the past year – more than for adults without children in the home (53%).
- About one in three (37%) Alaska Native women who smoke before pregnancy are able to quit by their last three months of pregnancy – but about half of them (53%) relapse and are smoking again after their babies are born.
- The clear majority (71%) of Alaska Native women who smoke after pregnancy say that they want to quit.
- About 44% of Alaska Native adult smokers with children in the home 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

- Just over one in ten (12%) Alaska Native adults with children in the home say that someone smokes inside their home – this was less than for adults without children in the home (22%).
- This translates into about 6,600 Alaska Native homes with children who are exposed to secondhand smoke.

### Smoking Exposure Indoors - Youth

- About half (49%) of Alaska Native high school students report being exposed to secondhand smoke indoors at least weekly.
- This translates into about 3,800 high school-aged youth who are exposed to secondhand smoke indoors statewide.

## Knowledge and Opinions about Tobacco Control

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- About 87% of Alaska Native adults with children in the home believe it is very important to keep stores from selling tobacco to teens; about 88% agree that tobacco use by adults should be banned on school grounds.
- About 42% of Alaska Native adults with children in the home believe that there is little benefit to quitting after smoking for 20 years – which is not true.
- About 76% of Alaska Native adults with children in the home believe that secondhand smoke is “very harmful” – significantly greater than for adults without children in the home.
- About half (47%) of Alaska Native adults with children in the home specifically know that exposure to secondhand smoke causes sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) and 93% know that it causes respiratory problems among children.

## 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.

