

# Cigarette Smoking among African Americans in Indiana



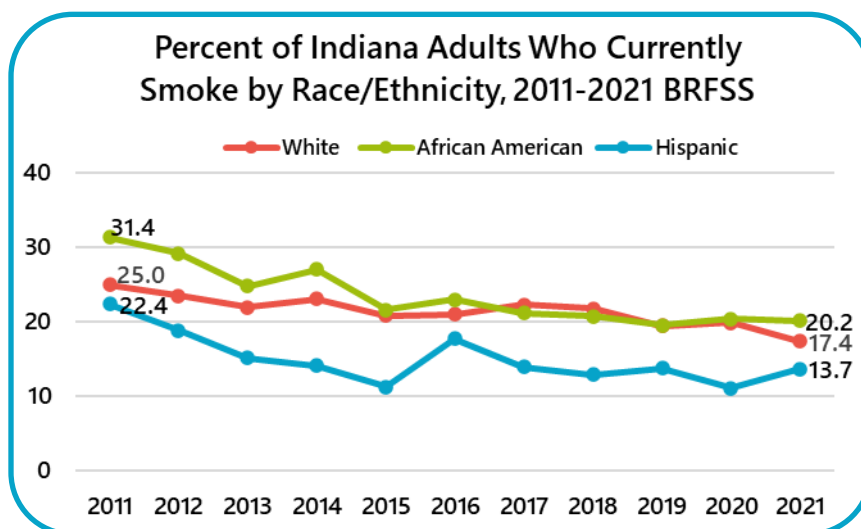
Tobacco Prevention and Cessation

July 2022

Everyone deserves a fair and just opportunity to be as healthy as possible, free from the harm that commercial tobacco can cause. While the number of Hoosiers smoking has declined significantly over the last decade, smoking rates have not dropped across all populations equally. Tobacco companies have spent billions targeting African Americans with marketing for menthol cigarette products. African American adults are also less likely to be protected from secondhand smoke exposure than white adults. Because of this environment, adults who are Black or African American smoke at higher rates than white or Hispanic adults, and more African Americans are living with and dying from smoking-related diseases than other racial and ethnic groups.

## Smoking Prevalence among Hoosier African Americans

- In 2021, 1 in 5 African American adults in Indiana (20.2%) reported currently smoking cigarettes, a significant decline from 31.4% in 2011.
- Historically, smoking prevalence among African American adults in Indiana has been higher than among white adults. But in recent years, smoking prevalence among African American adults was not statistically different than the smoking rate among white adults.



## Menthol Cigarette Use Among African Americans

- Tobacco companies have spent billions in targeted marketing towards African Americans for menthol cigarettes.
- Menthol makes cigarette smoke easier to inhale and may facilitate absorption of the harmful chemicals in cigarettes into the body. Additionally, use of menthol cigarettes is likely associated with increased dependence and lower success in quitting smoking.
- The 2021-2022 Indiana Adult Tobacco Survey showed that 8 out of 10 (80.0%) Hoosier African American adults who currently smoke or used to smoke reported smoking menthol cigarettes, compared with fewer than 3 out of 10 (28%) white adults who currently smoke or used to smoke.
- In a 2011 report to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the Tobacco Products Scientific Advisory Committee estimated that by 2020, menthol in cigarettes will have caused over 460,000 African Americans to start smoking and led to 4,700 excess deaths among African Americans nationwide.

## Fast Facts

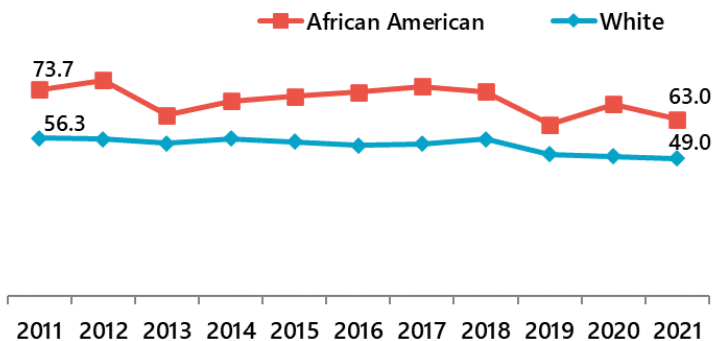
- More than **1 in 5** Hoosier African American adults (20.2%) reported currently smoking cigarettes in 2021.
- The majority of African American adults who reported smoking (80%) smoked menthol cigarettes.
- Over **6 in 10** Hoosier African Americans who smoke intend to quit smoking.
- Nearly **7 in 10** Hoosier African Americans who smoke tried to quit in the past year.
- Nationwide, African American adults who do not smoke are exposed to secondhand smoke at twice the rate as white adults who do not smoke.
- African Americans are more likely to die from smoking-related diseases than whites.
- Smoking increases the risk of heart disease, cancer, and stroke – the three leading causes of death among African Americans.

Currently the FDA has proposed 2 product standards, including prohibiting menthol in cigarettes, and prohibiting flavors in cigars. These proposed changes would aim to reduce the appeal of these products as well as decrease consumption

## Smoking Cessation among African Americans

- In 2021, 63% of Hoosier African Americans who smoke reported attempting to quit at least once in the past year. Rates of quit attempts are generally higher among African American adults who smoke cigarettes than white adults who smoke cigarettes in Indiana.
- The proportion of adults remaining abstinent from smoking (no smoking in the past year) is similar across both African American and white adults.

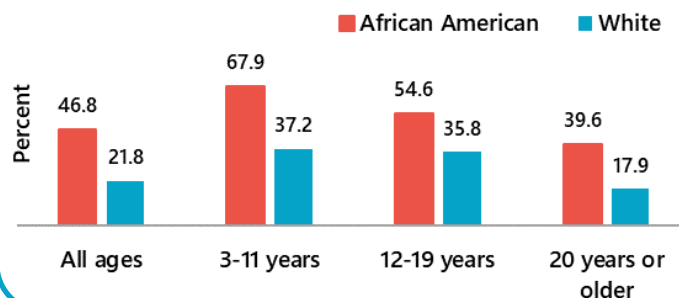
Percentage of Indiana Adults who Attempted to Quit Smoking in the Last 12 Months, by Race, 2011-2021 BRFSS



## Secondhand Smoke and Smoke-free Air

- In 2011-2012, the rate of secondhand smoke exposure among African American nonsmokers nationwide (46.8%) was more than double the rate among whites (21.8%).
- While secondhand smoke exposure rates have declined since 1999-2000, the decline has been smaller among African Americans than whites.
- In 2021-2022 \*, 69% of Hoosier African American adults believed that breathing secondhand smoke is very harmful compared to only 60% of white Hoosiers.
- The majority of Hoosier African Americans (72%) report having smoke-free homes. The proportion of adults living in smoke free homes was similar across African American and white adults.

Prevalence of secondhand smoke exposure among African American and White non-smokers, U.S. 2021-2022



## Conclusions

While smoking rates have declined among African Americans Hoosiers in recent years, they continue to be unfairly targeted by tobacco industry marketing and exposed to secondhand smoke more than other Hoosiers, putting them at increased risk for poor health outcomes.

## What Can You Do?

- Join a [local tobacco control coalition](#) in your community.
- If you or someone you know needs to quit tobacco, call 1-800-Quit-Now or visit [QuitNowIndiana.com](https://www.QuitNowIndiana.com) for free support.

For additional information on Indiana tobacco prevention and cessation:  
[In.gov/isdh/tpc](https://www.in.gov/isdh/tpc)



Tobacco Prevention and Cessation