Indiana African Americans and Smoking

Each year, approximately 45,000 African Americans in the U.S. die from a preventable smoking-related disease.\(^1\) Smoking significantly increases the risk of heart disease, cancer, and stroke – the three leading causes of death among African Americans.\(^2\)

Smoking Rates among Hoosier African Americans

- In 2015, over 1 in 5 (21.6%) African American adults in Indiana were current smokers, a substantial decline from 31.4% in 2011.\(^3\)
- Historically, smoking rates among African Americans in Indiana have been higher than among whites. In 2015, the smoking rate among African Americans (21.6%) was only slightly higher than among whites (20.9%).\(^3\)

Menthol Cigarette Use among African Americans

- In 2015, 75.9% of Hoosier African American adults who smoke reported smoking menthol cigarettes, compared with 18.3% of white smokers.\(^4\)
- Historically, tobacco companies have heavily targeted African Americans in their marketing of menthol cigarettes.\(^2\)
- Menthol may facilitate absorption of the harmful chemicals in cigarettes into the body, as menthol makes cigarette smoke easier to inhale.\(^2\)
- Use of menthol cigarettes is likely associated with increased dependence and lower success in quitting smoking.\(^5\)
- In a 2011 report to the 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.\(^6\)

Quick Facts

- Over 1 in 5 Hoosier African American adults (21.6%) were current smokers in 2015.
- The majority of African American smokers in Indiana (75.9%) report smoking menthol cigarettes.
- Over 9 in 10 Hoosier African Americans who smoke intend to quit smoking.
- Over 7 in 10 Hoosier African Americans who smoke tried to quit in the past year.
- Nationwide, African American nonsmokers are exposed to secondhand smoke at more than twice the rate of white nonsmokers.
- Each year an estimated 45,000 African Americans nationwide die from a preventable smoking-related disease.
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Smoking Cessation among African Americans

- In 2015 over 9 in 10 African American adult smokers in Indiana reported that they intended to quit smoking.\(^4\)
- In 2015, 71.2% of Hoosier African Americans who smoke reported attempting to quit at least once in the past year.\(^3\) Historically, rates of quit attempts have been higher among African Americans than whites in Indiana.\(^3\)

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%).\(^7\)
- While secondhand smoke exposure rates have declined since 1999-2000, the decline has been smaller among African Americans than whites.\(^7\)
- In 2015, 70.5% of Hoosier African American adults believed that breathing secondhand smoke is very harmful.\(^4\)
- The majority of Hoosier African Americans (86.3%) report having smoke-free homes, but non-smokers (94.2%) are significantly more likely to live in a smoke-free home than current smokers (43.3%).\(^4\)

Conclusions

While smoking rates have declined among Hoosier African Americans in recent years, many remain at risk for poor health outcomes due to smoking. Indiana’s tobacco control program continues to raise Hoosiers’ awareness of tobacco prevention and control issues among the African American community. For more information about resources and support available for quitting smoking, call 1-800-QUIT-NOW or visit www.QuitNowIndiana.com.

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