Smoking & Indiana Women

Tobacco use is the single most preventable cause of death and disease in the United States. Smoking alone is responsible for 9,700 premature deaths in Indiana annually. Close to 3,800 of these deaths happen to Hoosier women. Ninety percent of all lung cancer deaths in women are attributable to smoking. By 1987, lung cancer had surpassed breast cancer as the leading cause of cancer–related deaths in women. Women who smoke have an increased risk for other cancers as well.

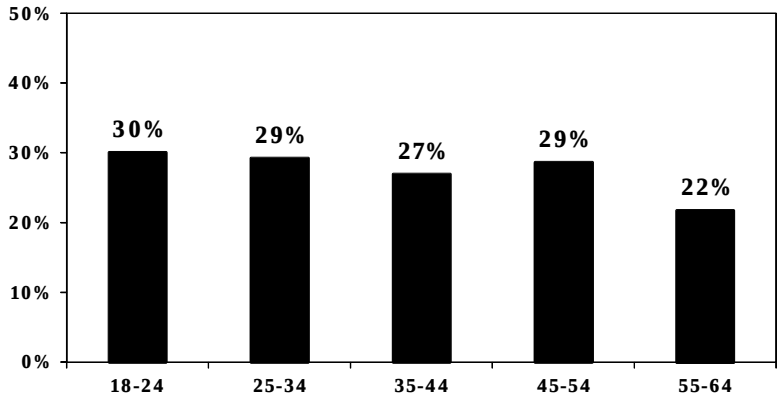
Women who smoke double their risk for developing coronary heart disease and are ten times more likely to die from chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD).

Postmenopausal women who smoke have lower bone density than those who never smoked.

Smoking Rates among Women in Indiana and the U.S.

- Eight percent of middle school girls and 23 percent of high school girls are current smokers.
- Over eighteen percent (18.5%) of pregnant women in Indiana smoke, nearly twice the national average (10.7%), making Indiana one of the highest among all U.S. states.
- Indiana women age 18-24 have the highest proportion of smokers among women of all other age groups at 30 percent.
- In general, as with all population groups, smoking rates tend to decline as education levels increase.
- Forty percent (39.5%) of women with less than a high school education are current smokers.

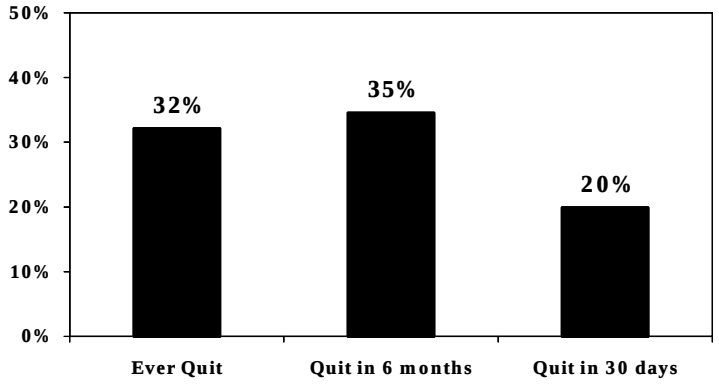
Indiana Female Smoking Rates by Age Group, 2011 BRFSS



Intentions to Quit Smoking

Intentions to quit smoking among women in Indiana are similar to the proportion of all smokers in the state. The percent of women smokers in Indiana expecting to quit in the next 6 months is higher than the percentage of male smokers.

Quit Intentions among Adult Female Smokers, 2008 Indiana Adult Tobacco Survey



Smoking During Pregnancy

Cigarette smoking among women increases the risk for infertility, preterm delivery, stillbirth, low birth weight babies, and sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS).

- Twenty to thirty percent (20-30%) of the cases of low birth weight babies can be attributable to smoking.
- Women who smoke during pregnancy had more than twice the risk of delivering a low birth weight baby.
- Babies with mothers who smoked during pregnancy have twice the risk of SIDS and infants of nonsmoking mothers.
- Women who smoke have a higher incidence of ectopic pregnancy.
- Pregnant smokers also have a 30-50% higher risk for miscarriage than nonsmokers.

The rate of Indiana mothers who reported smoking during pregnancy (18.5%) is considerably higher than the national average (10.7%). Even more alarming are rates in Indiana counties that exceed state and national averages. County rates range from 4.3% to 35.4%. See the ***Pregnant Women and Smoking*** fact sheet for county specific rates.

Prenatal exposure to secondhand smoke is also harmful to children and affects mental development. Children of mother who were exposed to secondhand smoke during pregnancy have lower scores on test for cognitive development at age two compared to children living in smoke free homes.