

Indiana Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Communities and Tobacco Use



Tobacco Prevention
and Cessation

June 2025

Everyone deserves the opportunity to be as healthy as possible, free from the harm that commercial tobacco use can cause. The tobacco industry has a history of targeting some groups including those identifying as lesbian, gay, or bisexual (LGB) with tailored marketing tactics. The tobacco industry has saturated these communities with advertising depicting tobacco products as a normal part of life. Tobacco companies have sponsored community outreach events such as LGB themed bar nights and annual Pride festivals while also promoting flavored products, including menthol. Additionally, the pressure of discrimination a person faces by identifying as LGB makes it more likely that a person will begin to use tobacco and make it harder to end their addiction to tobacco.^{2,6-8}

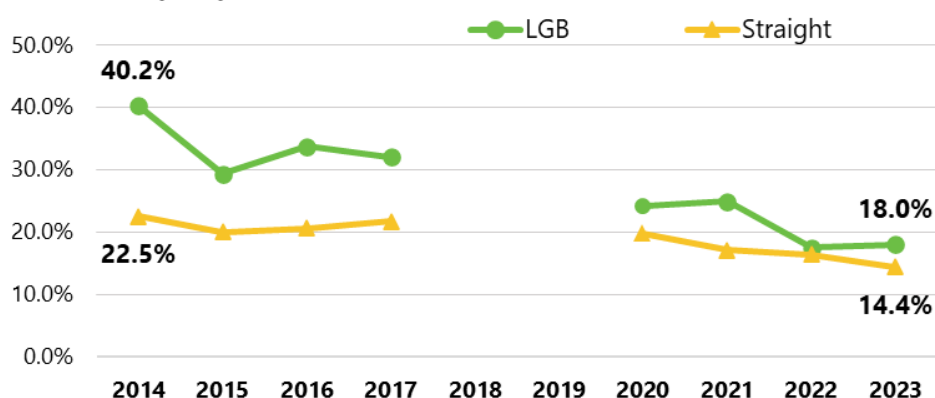
Current Smoking Among U.S. Adults by Sexual Orientation

Smoking disparities persist among adults in the United States, specifically among those in the LGB community. Nearly 1 in 6 adults identifying as lesbian, gay, or bisexual (LGB) currently smoke compared to 1 in 9 straight adults.^{1,4}

Current Smoking Among Indiana LGB Adults, 2023

- In the past several years, adult cigarette smoking was significantly higher in the LGB population compared to those that are straight
- In 2023, 18.0% of Indiana adults who identify as LGB reported currently smoking which is similar to straight adults (14.4%)
- In 2023, adult smoking among those identifying as LGB was significantly lower than what was seen in 2014*, 18.0% versus 40.2%³

Current Smoking Among Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual (LGB) Adults in Indiana, BRFSS, 2014-2023



*In Indiana, sexual orientation was first assessed on the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System in 2014. The questions on sexual orientation were not asked in 2018 or 2019.

Fast Facts

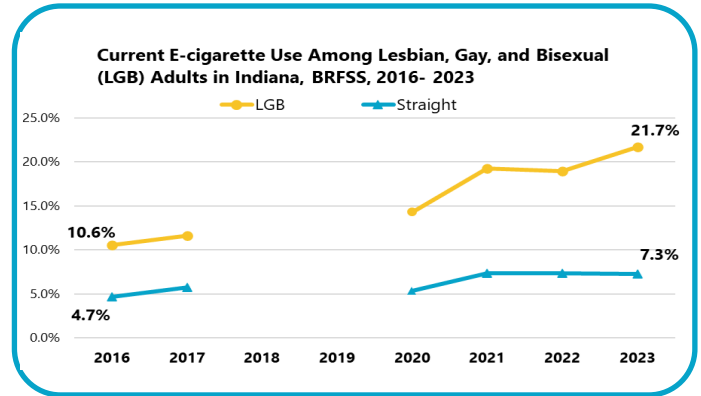
- In 2023, **18.0%** of Indiana adults identifying as LGB reported smoking cigarettes
- E-cigarette use among those identifying as LGB was **nearly 3x** of those who did not identify as LGB (**21.7% versus 7.3%**)
- Historically, tobacco companies have aggressively marketed their products to LGB communities
- **About 3 in 5** of Indiana adults identifying as LGB that smoke reported trying to quit smoking

Resources for Quitting:

Quit Now Indiana provides free counseling and support and is welcoming to all Hoosiers interested in quitting tobacco. Call **1-800-QUIT-NOW** or visit **QuitNowIndiana.com**.

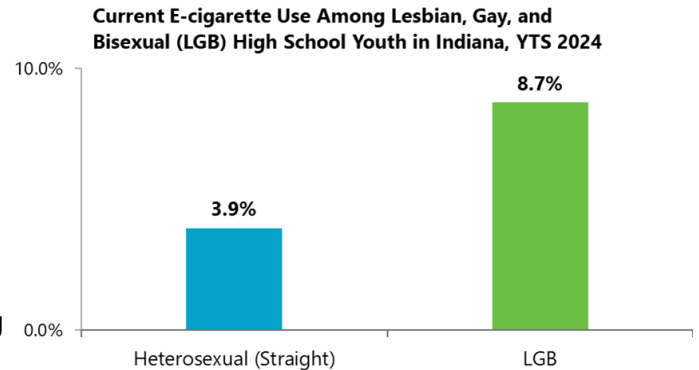
LGB Adult E-Cigarette Use

- In 2023, e-cigarette use among Indiana adults identifying as LGB was nearly **3x higher** compared to straight adults (21.7% vs. 7.3%)³
- Based on the most recent data from 2021, in the U.S. increased rates of e-cigarette use are also seen among those identifying as LGB where estimates are **3x higher** among those identifying as LGB than among those identifying as straight. (13.2% versus 4.1%)^{1,4}



LGB Youth E-Cigarette Use

- In Indiana nearly 1 in 12 high school youth identifying as LGB (8.1%) reported currently using e-cigarettes.
- In 2024, compared to 2022, e-cigarette use declined significantly among those that identified as heterosexual (straight), however no significant decline was observed among those that identified as lesbian, gay, or bisexual.⁵



Smoking Cessation Among LGB Adults

In 2023, **3 in 5** of Indiana adults identifying as LGB that smoke cigarettes (**60.3%**) reported trying to end their dependence on tobacco at least once in the last year. This was slightly higher than what was reported among straight adults (50.2%).³

Addressing LGB Tobacco Use Disparities

While the tobacco industry knowingly targets the LGB population with LGB friendly marketing and advertising, additional pressures can impact their use of tobacco including:

- Discrimination, violence, and stress experienced by persons identifying as LGB
- Barriers to accessing health care and tobacco dependence treatment services
- Higher prevalence of risk factors such as alienation, victimization, low self-esteem, and depression among LGB youth and young adults^{2,6-8}

Conclusions

Implementing statewide comprehensive tobacco control best practices as well as culturally appropriate anti-tobacco messaging may help reduce the greater burden tobacco places on LGB communities.

If you or someone you know needs to end their dependence on tobacco, call **1-800-Quit-Now** or visit **QuitNowIndiana.com** for free support.

References:

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4. Cornelius ME, Loretan CG, Jamal A, et al. Tobacco Product Use Among Adults – United States, 2021. *MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep* 2023;72:475–483. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.mm7218a1>.
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8. Blosnich JR, Horn K. Associations of discrimination and violence with smoking among emerging adults: differences by gender and sexual orientation. *Nicotine Tob Res.* 2011 Dec;13(12):1284-95. doi: 10.1093/ntr/ntr183. Epub 2011 Oct 12. PMID: 21994344; PMCID: PMC3223581.

Notes:

In 2023 and in previous years, the number of LGB adults surveyed by the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) has been small. This smaller sample size each year can cause fluctuations in rates of smoking, making it look like a significant change has happened when it has not.