

## Tobacco 101

Tobacco is the leading cause of preventable death in the United States. Tobacco use is a pediatric disease: most tobacco users begin using tobacco before their 18th birthday. Young people are uniquely susceptible to the nicotine in tobacco products because their brains are still developing. Tobacco has significant health effects for users and for nonusers who are exposed to tobacco smoke.

Statistics about the impact of tobacco on the US population:

- Tobacco is responsible for over 480,000 deaths per year in the United States, including over 41,000 deaths from secondhand smoke.<sup>1</sup>
- 13.7% of adults aged 18 or older are current cigarette smokers.<sup>2,3</sup>
- 90% of smokers start before the age of 18.<sup>4</sup>
- The estimated economic costs attributable to smoking and exposure to tobacco smoke continue to increase and now approach \$300 billion annually, with direct medical costs of at least \$170 billion and productivity losses of more than \$156 billion a year, with losses of \$5.6 billion due to secondhand smoke exposure.<sup>5</sup>
- Close to 70% of tobacco users report wanting to quit smoking and approximately half made a quit attempt in the past year.<sup>6</sup>
- There are safe and effective ways to quit smoking, including behavioral counseling, quitlines, and pharmacotherapy.<sup>7</sup>
- Exposure to tobacco products and secondhand smoke has significant health effects for children and other nonsmokers.
- There is no safe level of exposure to SHS.<sup>8</sup>
- Children are more likely than adults to be exposed to secondhand smoke in their homes: about 40% of children ages 3-11 are exposed to secondhand smoke.<sup>9</sup>
- Children who live in multiunit housing are more likely to be exposed to secondhand smoke than their peers who live in single-family homes.
- Tobacco companies spend approximately \$26 million each day on marketing their products in the United States.<sup>10</sup>

### References:

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