

SURVEILLANCE UPDATE

2005 North Carolina Youth Tobacco Survey


Tobacco Prevention and Control Branch
October 2006

Who's Still Using Tobacco in North Carolina?



Tobacco continues to be the leading cause of preventable death in the United States and in North Carolina. Each year, about 430,000 Americans die prematurely from smoking-related diseases. That's one in every five deaths in this country, and enough people to fill the Carolina Hurricanes' RBC Center Stadium 22 times! More than 12,000 North Carolinians die every year and more than 80% of America's smokers start smoking before the age of 18!

Youth smoking continues to haunt North Carolina. In 2005, as measured by the N.C. Youth Tobacco Survey, 26% of middle schoolers, (students in grades 6-8), and 46% of high schoolers, (grades 9-12), have smoked at least one or two puffs of a cigarette. That means that more high schoolers have tried smoking than play high school sports! What's more, nearly 6% of all middle schoolers and more than 20% of all high schoolers currently smoke cigarettes.

Smoking is a problem that affects all of North Carolina's students; it does not discriminate based upon gender or ethnicity. Nearly equal numbers of girls (4.1% middle school and 19.8% high school) and boys (7.1% middle school and 20.7% high school) currently smoke cigarettes. Current smoking follows expected patterns by grade level, increasing steadily from 3.8% of 6th graders to 28.3% of 12th graders. No differences exist between different ethnic groups and smoking prevalence. In middle school, whites (6.0%) are as likely to smoke as blacks (5.3%).

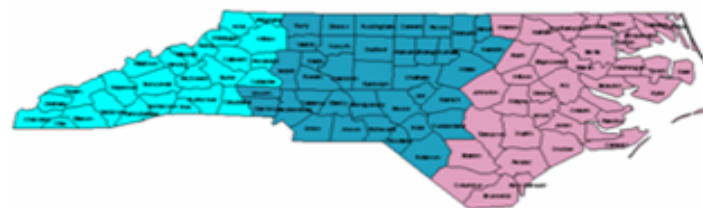
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Lifetime Tobacco Use among High School Students in N.C., 2005



Western counties: 58.8%
Central counties: 57.6%
Eastern counties: 62.1%

Lifetime Tobacco Use among Middle School Students in N.C., 2005



Western counties: 31.1%
Central counties: 32.9%
Eastern counties: 33.5%

THE GREAT AMERICAN SMOKEOUT:

The American Cancer Society (ACS) hosts the 30th annual Great American Smokeout on Thursday, November 16, 2006 to help smokers quit tobacco use for at least 24 hours, with the hope that smokers will then be able to quit completely. Smokers should use the Great American Smokeout as a call to action to see their physicians and use the effective treatments available to help them convert their quit attempt into successful long-term cessation. For the Great American Smokeout, ACS staff and volunteers provide smoking cessation and smoking prevention activities for people of all ages at the local ACS offices. Additional information is available from ACS:

1-800-227-2345 or www.cancer.org ■

In North Carolina, 55.5% of current high school smokers and 69.5% of current middle school smokers have tried to quit in the last year. However, 33% of middle schoolers and 40.9% of high schoolers stayed off cigarettes for less than 30 days when they last tried to quit. Perhaps more revealingly, only 11% of current middle school smokers and 6.4% of current high school smokers have participated in a program to help them quit using tobacco.



Less than 40% of those quit attempts are successful. Just a handful of teen smokers participate in a tobacco cessation program to help them quit. This indicates one potential area to vastly improve cessation efforts— participation in supportive quit programs that can improve cessation results. We must provide easily accessible quit programs and encourage youth to use them.

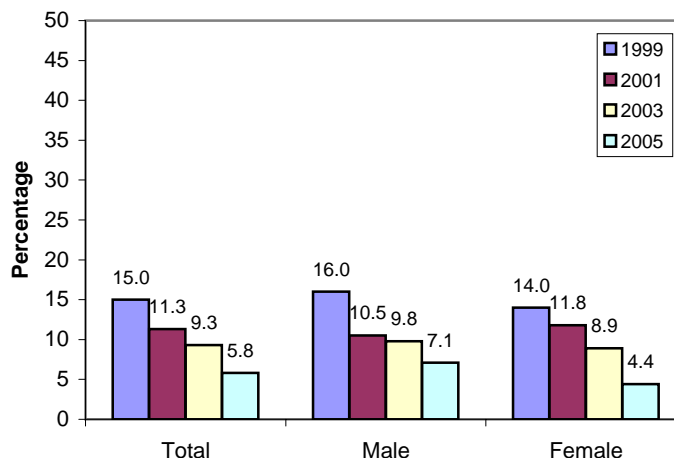


One such program, the N.C. Tobacco Use Quitline, was launched in November 2005 by the N.C. Division of Public Health and the N.C. Health and Wellness Trust Fund. This premier telephone cessation service is available toll-free to all North Carolinians, both youth and adults, and is staffed by quit coaches trained to help tobacco users quit.

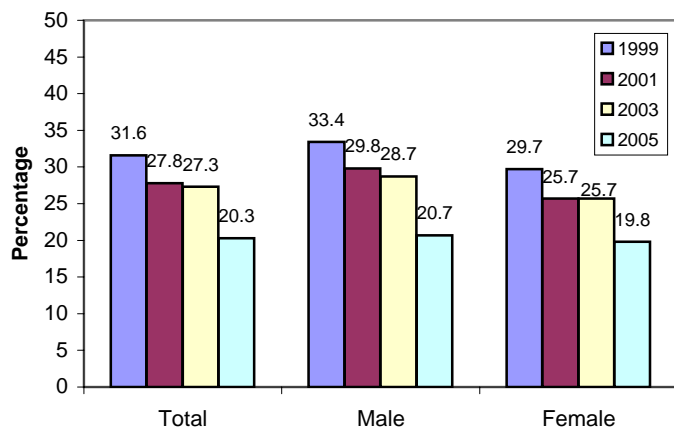
Specifically, quit coaches are prepared to help young people quit, addressing issues and barriers to quitting that are unique to young tobacco users. The quitline is available from 8 am to midnight, 7 days per week, at 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669). It features a proactive service, so that once the tobacco user makes the first call, the quit coach can arrange to call the tobacco user back to check on progress and answer questions.

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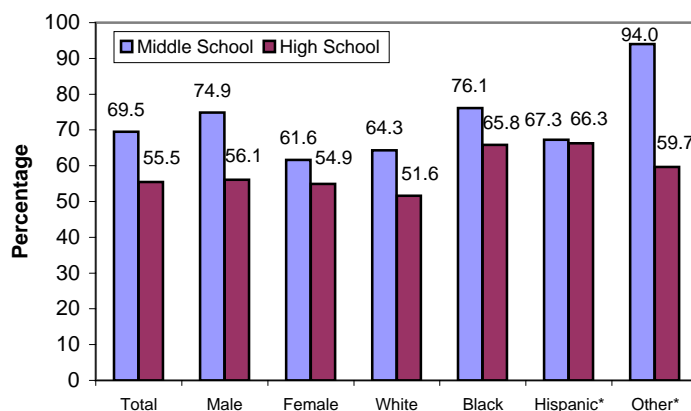
Percentage of N.C. middle school students who report current smoking, by year: N.C. YTS, 2005



Percentage of N.C. high school students who report current cigarette smoking, by year: N.C. YTS, 2005



Percentage of students who report quit smoking for a day or longer in the past year, by gender and race/ethnicity: N.C. YTS, 2005



There is also a fax referral system, whereby health care providers, school health officials or others working with tobacco users fax a signed consent form to the quitline so that the quitline can make the initial call.

This evidence-based service is an effective resource to help North Carolinians of all ages quit the use of tobacco. For more information, contact the Tobacco Prevention and Control Branch at 919-707-5400.

For more information on tobacco use prevention and control, please visit the CDC Office on Smoking and Health's Tobacco Information and Prevention Source page at www.cdc.gov/tobacco.

References:

- 2004 National Youth Tobacco Survey, Preliminary Results: www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5412a1.htm#tab1
- National Cancer Institute: Cancer Facts: cis.nci.nih.gov/fact/10_19.htm



For more information, please contact:
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 1932 Mail Service Center
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www.communityhealth.dhhs.state.nc.us/tobacco.htm

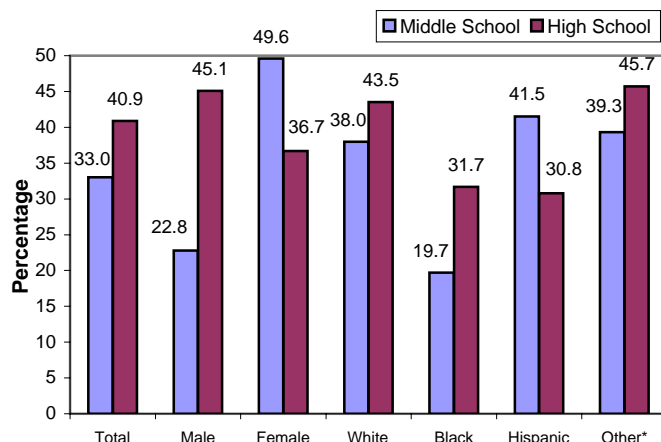


For more information, please contact:
 Health and Wellness Trust Fund at
www.healthwellnc.org



More information on North Carolina Youth Tobacco Survey (N.C. YTS) is available at www.communityhealth.dhhs.state.nc.us/tobacco.htm

Percentage of N.C. students who quit for less than 30 days on their last quit attempt, by gender and race/ethnicity: N.C. YTS, 2005



Percentage of N.C. students who have ever participated in a cessation program, by gender and race/ethnicity: N.C. YTS, 2005

