

CIGARETTE SMOKING

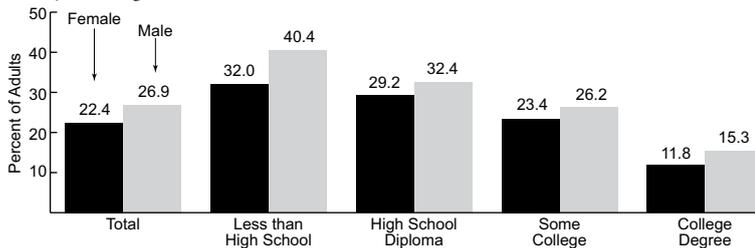
According to the U.S. Surgeon General, smoking damages every organ in the human body.⁸ Cigarette smoke contains toxic ingredients that prevent red blood cells from carrying a full load of oxygen, impair genes that control the growth of cells, and bind to the airways of smokers. This contributes to numerous chronic illnesses, including several types of cancers, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), cardiovascular disease, reduced bone density and fertility, and premature death.⁸ Due to its high prevalence and wide-ranging health consequences, smoking is the single largest cause of preventable death and disease for both men and women in the United States, accounting for an estimated 443,000 premature deaths

annually.⁹ In 2009–2011, women aged 18 and older were less likely than men to report cigarette smoking in the past month (22.4 versus 26.9 percent, respectively). For both men and women, smoking was more common among those with lower levels of educational attainment. For example, 32.0 percent of women and 40.4 percent of men without a high school diploma smoked in the past month, compared to 11.8 percent of women and 15.3 percent of men with a college degree. Smoking also varied by race and ethnicity. Among women, smoking prevalence ranged from 6.9 percent among non-Hispanic Asians to 33.9 percent among non-Hispanic American Indian/Alaska Natives (data not shown).

Quitting smoking has major and immediate health benefits, including reducing the risk of diseases caused by smoking and improving overall health.⁸ In 2009–2011, 8 to 9 percent of women and men who had ever smoked daily and smoked in the previous 3 years had not smoked in the past year. For both women and men, the proportion of adults who quit smoking varied by educational attainment. For example, women with college degrees were almost twice as likely to have quit smoking as women who did not finish high school (12.2 versus 6.2 percent, respectively). The Affordable Care Act required new, private insurance plans to cover tobacco cessation treatment and counseling without cost-sharing in 2010 and will require the same for plans in the health insurance marketplaces in 2014.¹⁰

Past-Month Cigarette Smoking* Among Adults Aged 18 and Older, by Educational Attainment and Sex, 2009–2011

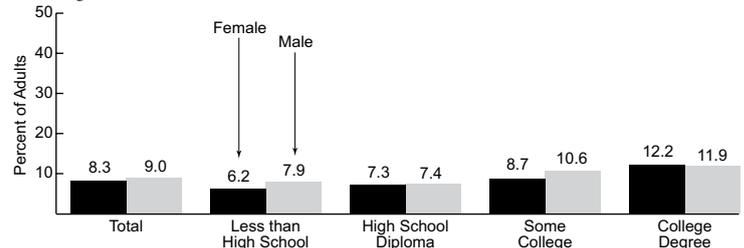
Source II.3: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, National Survey on Drug Use and Health



*All estimates are age-adjusted.

Past-Year Smoking Cessation* Among Adults Aged 18 and Older, by Educational Attainment Level and Sex, 2009–2011

Source II.3: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, National Survey on Drug Use and Health



*Defined as the proportion of adults who did not smoke in the past year among those who ever smoked daily at some point in their lives and smoked in the past 3 years; excludes adults who started smoking in the past year. All estimates are age-adjusted.