

Smoking statistics

Smoking-related diseases killed 14,900 Australians in the financial year 2004–05. This equals 40 preventable deaths every day. The major tobacco-related diseases include cancer, heart disease and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. Smoking resulted in over 750,000 days spent in hospital and cost \$670 million in hospital costs in the financial year 2004-05.

According to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, most deaths resulting from tobacco smoking occurred in people aged 65 years or more. However, around one in five deaths occurred in the 35–64 years age group.

Smoking kills more men than women – 9,700 men compared to 5,100 women. Cancer is the number one cause of tobacco-related death in men (57 per cent) and women (51 per cent), with lung cancer accounting for around 75 per cent and 72 per cent of cancers for men and women respectively. Lung cancer currently causes the most cancer deaths in Australia and this is due mainly to smoking.

Smoking behaviours

In 2007 around 19 per cent of people aged 18 years and over were smokers. Of particular concern is the smoking rate among Aboriginal people, which in 2004–05 was reported to be 50 per cent – more than double that of the wider community.

Selected statistics from *Tobacco in Australia: Facts and Issue* include:

- The male smoking rate was 21 per cent and the female smoking rate was 18 per cent (where current smoking included daily and weekly smokers).
- Male smoking rates were higher in all adult age groups.
- People aged 25–29 years were more likely to be daily or weekly smokers than all other age groups, with a smoking rate of 28 per cent.
- People aged 60 years and over were least likely to be smokers (11 per cent).
- Smoking rates for Australians aged 18 and over have declined by over 40 per cent between 1980 and 2007.
- Ex-smokers outnumber current smokers: in 2007, just over one quarter (25.1 per cent) of Australians had quit smoking during their lifetime.
- By 2007, 61 per cent of people who had ever smoked had quit.

Smokers in Victoria

The Centre for Behavioural Research in Cancer estimates that in 2008, 16.5 per cent of Victorian adults aged 18 and over smoked regularly.

- The smoking rate for men (18.4 per cent) was higher than for women (14.7 per cent).
- Former smokers greatly outnumbered current smokers – 32.3 per cent of men and 27.6 per cent of women have quit smoking in Victoria.
- Smoking rates were higher among people with lower education – 20.5 per cent of persons who had completed year 12 or lower smoked, compared to 12.9 per cent of people with a tertiary education.

The 2005 Victorian Secondary School Students Survey estimated that 8 per cent of 12–15 year old students were current smokers. Among 16–17 year old students, 18 per cent of males and 20 per cent of females had smoked in the week before the survey. Alarming, research also indicates that the mean age of adolescents taking up smoking is around 16 years old.

Comparative death rates

Smoking kills more Victorians every year than road accidents, alcohol and other drugs combined. Deaths due to tobacco use account for 89 per cent of all drug-caused deaths and around 11 per cent of deaths from all causes.

Death rates from tobacco-caused disease are higher among Indigenous people than in the non-Indigenous population, and Indigenous Australians are more likely to die from these diseases at a younger age.

The benefits of quitting

Quitting smoking has immediate health benefits and dramatically reduces the risk of smoking-related diseases, whatever the person's age. Statistics include:

- Quitting before middle age reduces the risk of lung cancer by 90 per cent.
- After 15 years of being a non-smoker, the risk of stroke is reduced to that of a person who has never smoked.
- After one year of being a non-smoker, the increased risk of death from heart attack is halved.

Where to get help

- Your doctor
- Your pharmacist
- Quitline Tel. 13 7848 (13 QUIT)

Things to remember

- In 2004–05, 14,900 Australians died from smoking-related disease, which means there were 40 preventable deaths every day.
- Cancer is the number one cause of smoking-related death in men (57 per cent) and women (51 per cent).
- Quitting smoking reduces the risk of smoking-related diseases in people of all ages.

This page has been produced in consultation with, and approved by:

Quit

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