

TOBACCO

Overview

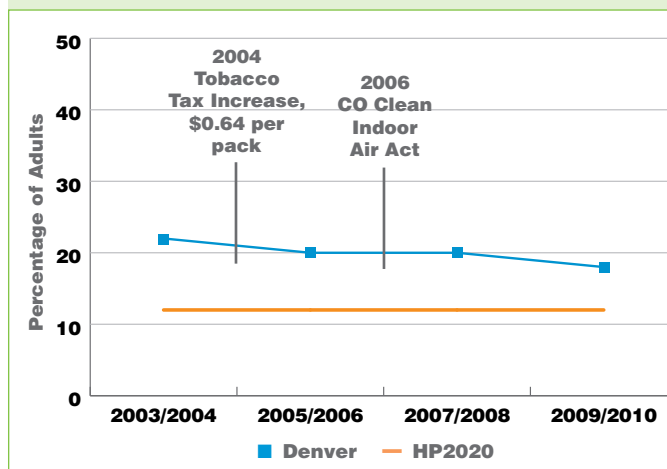
Tobacco use remains the leading cause of preventable premature death and illness in Denver. Decreasing tobacco use is the single most powerful tool we have to improve health in Denver.

In Denver, approximately 18% of people smoke.¹³ Between 2006 and 2010, over 10,000 people died in Denver from tobacco-related illnesses.¹¹ Recent policy efforts have attempted to reduce rates of smoking. These include a 2004 tobacco product tax increase and the 2006 Colorado Clean Indoor Air Act to reduce secondhand smoke exposure in public places. However, tobacco use among adults remains relatively stable in Denver and does not meet the Healthy People 2020 goal for the nation (12%) (FIGURES 1 AND 2).

Tobacco use is linked to several common diseases and causes of death. These include cardiovascular disease, cancer, chronic lung disease, and lung infection (FIGURE 3). Cigarette smoke contains more than 7,000 chemicals and compounds.¹²² Women who smoke during pregnancy put themselves and their unborn babies at increased risk for health problems (FIGURE 4).¹²³ Secondhand smoke harms the health of babies and children as their bodies are still developing. The risks of developing heart disease and lung cancer are increased by up to 30% in non-smokers exposed to tobacco smoke.¹²⁴ Smoking and breathing in secondhand smoke are linked to severe asthma and breathing problems.

FIGURE 1

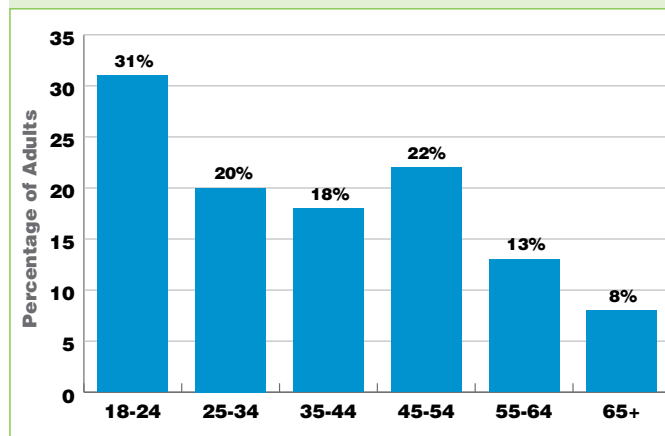
Tobacco use Among Adults DENVER, 2003 - 2010



The smoking rate in Denver adults has stayed relatively stable. Denver remains short of the Healthy People 2020 goal of 12%.
 SOURCE: Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System

FIGURE 2

Percentage of Adults Smoking Cigarettes by Age DENVER, 2009 AND 2010



Tobacco use varies by age and is highest among 18 to 24 year olds. The tobacco industry has heavily targeted this age group with marketing and promotions.

SOURCE: Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System

Cost Facts



Tobacco use costs society much more than the purchase price of a pack of cigarettes (currently approximately \$5). It is estimated to cost \$7.62 per pack of cigarettes to treat tobacco-related illnesses. The cost of lost wages due to early death, decreased productivity, and increased sick days adds another \$11.63 per pack.¹²⁷ The Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids estimates that each household in Colorado pays \$572 per year in increased taxes for publicly-funded health care for tobacco-related costs.¹²⁵

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Tobacco use is common among youth and youth have few barriers to buying tobacco. Every year, nearly 5,300 Colorado youth become daily smokers.¹²⁵ In a recent survey, 24% of eleventh graders in Denver smoked.¹² Ninety percent of adult smokers report having regularly used tobacco products before they graduated high school. Of Colorado's youth, 92,000 will die prematurely because of decisions made when they were younger.¹²⁵ Youth are at greater risk for tobacco addiction due to social pressures and industry product packaging and advertising that targets youth. Limiting both tobacco marketing and placement of advertising can reduce these pressures.

Disparities in tobacco use result in more tobacco-related disease in population subgroups. Ten groups have higher smoking rates:¹²⁶

- Black/African Americans
- Native American/American Indians
- Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders
- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, and Questioning
- Latinos and Hispanics
- People with low socioeconomic status (income)
- People with disabilities
- People with mental illnesses
- People with substance use disorders
- Chew and spit tobacco users

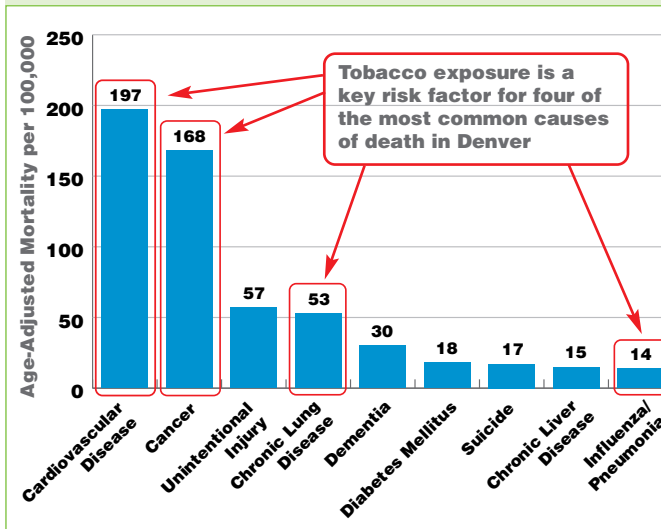
Tobacco industry marketing targets these same subgroups. Efforts to reduce smoking in Denver should focus on those most affected (FIGURES 5 AND 6).

Local Story

Smoke-free Hospitals and Nursing Homes

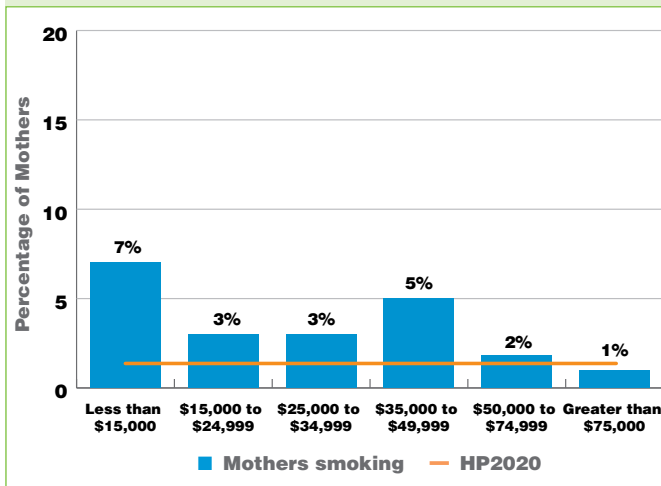
Smokers are absent from work more days per year than non-smokers. Tobacco-free worksite policies help users to quit smoking. It also means a cleaner environment, a positive company image, and lower health care costs. In 2008, seven Denver hospitals implemented tobacco-free policies to ban tobacco use on their campuses. Currently, more than 50 Colorado hospitals and nursing homes ban smoking and tobacco use on their property.¹²⁸ In 2008, Denver passed a law banning smoking on sidewalks around hospitals. These policies protect patients, visitors, and employees from breathing in secondhand smoke.

FIGURE 3
Tobacco and Common Causes of Death DENVER, 2010



Tobacco use is a major health risk factor. It is linked to four of the top causes of death in Denver: cardiovascular disease, cancer, chronic lung disease, and influenza/pneumonia.
SOURCE: Vital Statistics

FIGURE 4
Percentage of Mothers who Smoked During Pregnancy by Income DENVER, 2010



Smoking while pregnant increases the possibility of stillbirth, miscarriage, and low birth weight babies. Smoking during pregnancy is highest among low income groups. Sixty percent of women who reported smoking during pregnancy in 2010 had an income of <\$15,000.
SOURCE: Vital Records

Comparison Story

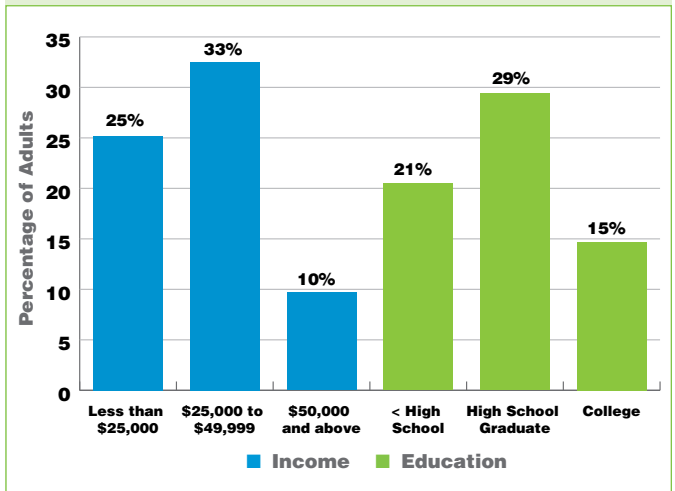
Tobacco Retailer Licensing

There are an estimated 680 tobacco retailers in Denver. Colorado is one of 14 states without a tobacco retailer license requirement.¹²⁹ Licensing would require all businesses to obtain a license to sell tobacco, tobacco products, or tobacco equipment. Licensing can reduce illegal tobacco sales to youth and increase compliance with local, state, and federal tobacco laws. In California, a study reviewed illegal sales rates in 31 communities before and after a strong licensing law was passed. These sales rates were determined by youth tobacco purchase surveys given by local agencies. Results showed that local tobacco retailer licensing laws reduced illegal sales to minors.¹³⁰ With licensing, state and local officials can better control the location and concentration of tobacco retailers. However, a licensing ordinance alone will not automatically decrease illegal sales rates. The study showed that proper education and enforcement about the local ordinance and state youth access laws were needed. Revenue generated from license fees would help pay for the identification, education, and monitoring of retailers, including compliance checks (FIGURE 7).



FIGURE 5

Percentage of Adults Currently Smoking by Income and Education DENVER, 2009 AND 2010

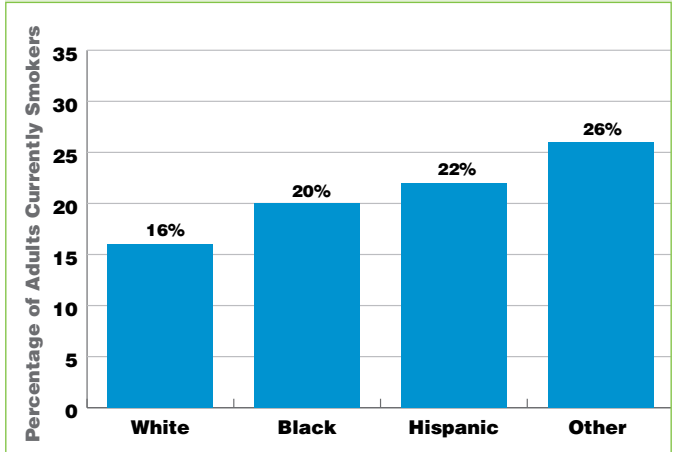


People of lower socioeconomic status and less education are more likely to smoke cigarettes. This trend is consistent for the past five years in Denver.

SOURCE: Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System

FIGURE 6

Current Smokers by Race and Ethnicity DENVER, 2009 AND 2010



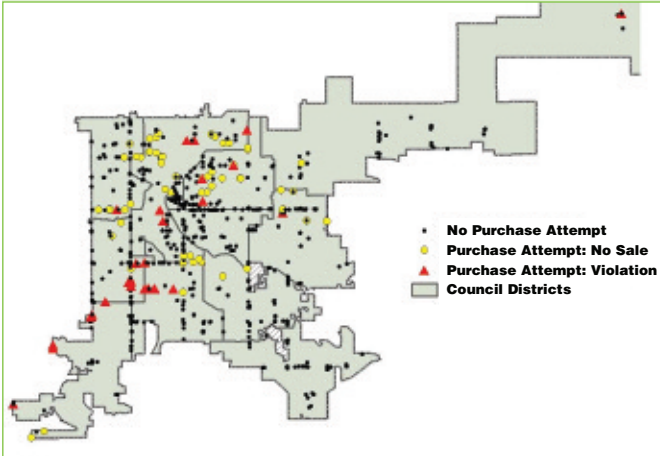
Some racial and ethnic groups have higher percentages of smokers. Black, Hispanics, and those reported as Other races have higher smoking rates than do White Denver residents. Tobacco use has decreased among Blacks over the past five years.

SOURCE: Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System

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FIGURE 7

Tobacco Retailers Purchase Attempts by Minors DENVER, 2009



Some Denver tobacco retailers sell tobacco products to underage youth. Some areas of Denver have more illegal sales to minors than others.

SOURCE: Colorado Department of Revenue

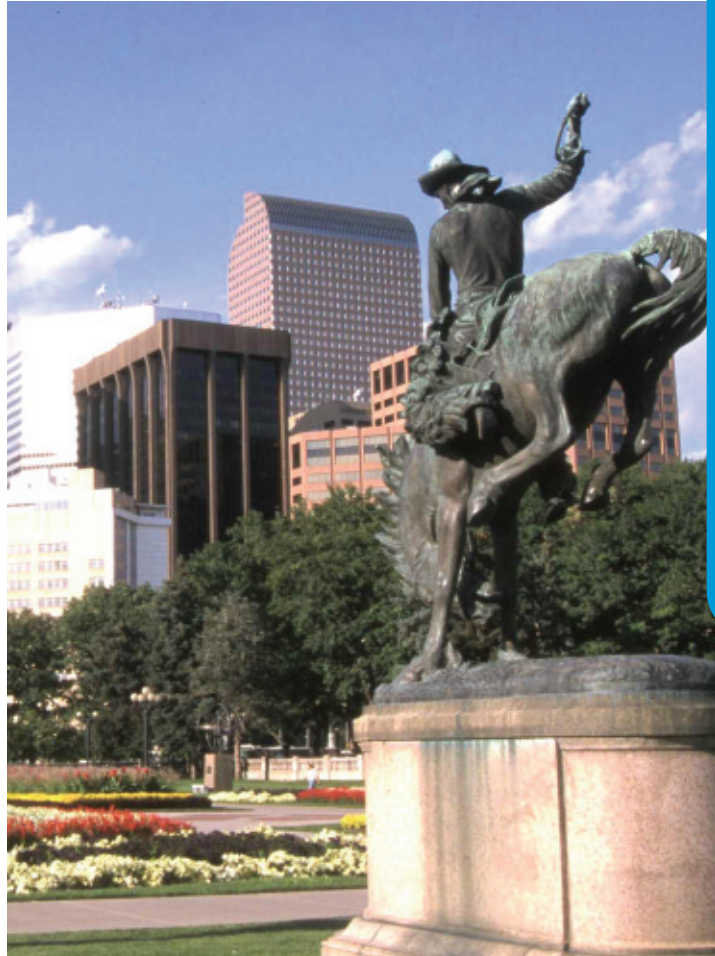


Photo courtesy of VISIT DENVER, The Convention & Visitors Bureau



Did You Know

- Cigarettes contain toxic chemicals found in nail polish remover, toilet cleaner, and batteries. Secondhand smoke is toxic. Smoke from the end of the burning cigarette delivers a large dose of these toxic chemicals to anyone nearby.
- The earlier that a person starts smoking, the greater the likelihood is that he or she will become a lifelong smoker. Young adults, ages 18 to 24, are at high risk of becoming lifetime tobacco users and are directly targeted.¹³¹
- Quitting tobacco leads to decreased risk of many serious health problems. The Colorado Quitline helps people who want to quit smoking and live tobacco free. Call the Colorado Quitline at 1 800 QUIT NOW (1-800-784-8669) or visit the website at www.myquitpath.org.
- Colorado has a \$0.84 per pack cigarette tax and ranks 34th among the states for cigarette tax rates. Youth are more likely to live tobacco free as the cost of cigarettes increases.¹³²
- In Denver, 83% of residents have a rule that smoking is not allowed in the home. Learn how to make homes and multi-unit housing (apartments, condos, townhomes, etc.) tobacco- and smoke-free by calling Denver Public Health at 303-602-3700.¹³³