

Special points of interest:

- By age 17 almost 70% of youth have tried smoking
- Older youth are smoking more often
- There is a strong relationship between cigarette and marijuana smoking
- Males are much more likely to chew tobacco and smoke cigars

Fact Sheet #6 Tobacco Use

Tobacco Use

“The health effects of smoking are widely known. Smoking (and environmental tobacco smoke) is the leading cause of lung cancer, and has also been linked to leukemia, as well as to cancer of the sinuses, brain, breast, uterus, and thyroid and lymph glands” (Health Canada, 1999b).

Fewer youth smoke today than was the case even 5 years ago, and it is much less prevalent among teens than it was in 1981. In 2005, 8% of teens aged 12 to 17 smoked daily or occasionally, down from 14% in 2001 (Statistics Canada, 2006). In this study of rural youth, 14.1% of youth had smoked in the past 30 days, a much higher percentage of youth smoking that was reported at the national level.

Among Canadian teens (12-19) who smoke, about 57% smoke every day down from 80% in 1998 (CCSD 2006). Only about 37.5 % of rural youth reported smoking 20 to 30 days the past 30 and almost 40% reported smoking only 1 or 2 days, suggesting some different smoking habits among this group than among the Canadian youth responding to the Canadian Community Health Survey.

Fewer Canadian youth are starting to smoke in 2005, 82% of youth had never smoked compared to 73% in 2001 (Statistics Canada 2006). In 2005 in Saskatchewan, 74% of youth 12 to 19 have never smoked. This trend is very positive since few smokers start smoking when they are adults. In this study of rural youth, 73% of youth had never tried smoking more than one or two puffs, a lower rate than is the case nationally but close to the provincial rate. This indicates a pressing need to reduce the number of students who start smoking in rural Saskatchewan. In 2003, the highest Canadian youth smoking rate (28%) was in Saskatchewan (CCSD 2006).

These patterns were similar for both young men and women. Smoking increases sharply with age. “In 2003, 15% of Canadian teens aged 15 to 17 were smokers, compared to 24% of youth aged 18 to 19. Girls aged 15 to 17 were more likely than boys to smoke (17% vs13%)” CCSD 2006 p 52).

“Saskatchewan is higher than the national average for smoking at 22%. We have not changed or improved these figures.”

- Key Informant

“Hey do you guys smoke that [cigars] when you’re playing card games?”

“No but it’s usually at someone’s house so no one smokes. I’ve never been to a card game where anybody was smoking.”

“That would be a parent thing wouldn’t it? Cause parents don’t want you smoking in their house because it’s disgusting.”

“That’s interesting though, we can have a few beers when we’re playing cards but we can’t have a cigarette.”

-Youth Focus Group Participants

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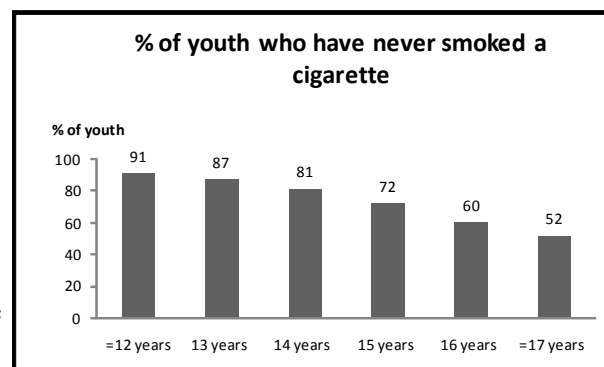
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73% of youth have never smoked

Overall, 72.7% of youth have never smoked. The graph shows that by age 17, 51.5% of youth have never smoked a whole cigarette. The percentage who have smoked increases significantly with age, from 9% at 12 years old, to 49.5% at 17 years old.

When we asked what age youth were when they first smoked a whole cigarette, the majority of youth reported they first tried smoking when they were in the 13-14 age group. Although the difference between the responses from female and male youth is not significant, female youth appear to be starting smoking at a slightly younger age than male youth.

When we asked how many youth had tried even one or two puffs of a cigarette, the numbers are



quite a bit higher. In the 12 and under age group, 17% had tried at least one or two puffs. By 17 years, 61% had tried at least one or two puffs.

Older youth smoke on more days and smoke more cigarettes per day

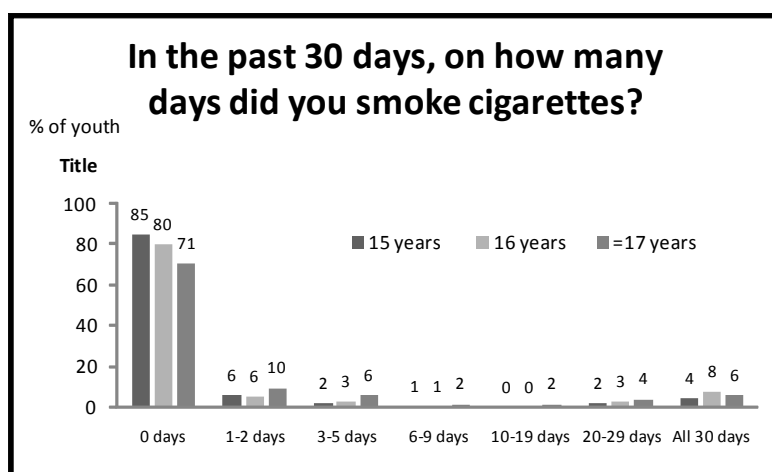
There is significant difference ($p < 0.01$) among the age groups in the number of days they reported smoking during the past 30 days with older youth smoking more regularly than younger youth.

The number of youth smoking at least one day in the past 30 days increased from less than 3% at age 12 years old to less than 29% at age 17 years old or over.

The number of youth smoking everyday increases from 0.8% at 12 years old to 7.5% at 16 years old.

There is no significant difference between the number of female and male youth who smoked all 30 days. However, female youth seem more likely to be smoking only one or two days in the past month.

Older youth smoke more ciga-



rettes per day than younger youth. The number of 12 year olds who reported smoking 11-20 cigarettes per day account for 1.0%, with approximately 5% of youth 15 years old or over reporting they smoked 11-20 cigarettes per day.

The difference between the responses from female and male youth is not significant. In general, 12.8 % of male youth and

15.3 % of female youth smoked cigarettes in the past month. The data suggests that female youth smoke fewer cigarettes in a month than male youth with a higher percentage of female youth smoking fewer than 5 cigarettes per days while higher percentages of male youth reported smoking 6-10 or 11-20 cigarettes per day.

Strong relationship between smoking cigarettes and smoking marijuana

There is a strong relationship between marijuana use and cigarette use. Cigarette smoking in a month is positively related to marijuana smoking in the

month. For example, while 90% of youth who did not try marijuana in the past month also did not smoke in the past month, 52% of youth who smoked

marijuana 3 or more days in the past month also smoked cigarettes on 10 or more days in the past month.

"I chew snuff and I play a lot of sports and a lot of the guys chew and I think they don't smoke cause it (chewing) doesn't screw up your lungs as much as smoking would, so you can play the sports and still keeps up to a high level. You're not screwing up your lungs for running and stuff like that." - Youth Focus Group Participant

"We think it calms us down when we smoke. Like people who smoke, I smoke, I think it calms me down but what you never think about it..it's just increasing your blood pressure and you just get hyper." - Youth Focus Group Participant

Younger youth get cigarettes by bumming or taking them from family members

"Smoking doesn't seem as harmful as you were saying, why do girls do that versus other stuff that girls don't do. We don't think it actually affects us as much but in the long run it screws us up more than if we were to do other stuff." - Youth Focus Group Participant

The majority of youth (4.7%) got their cigarettes by bumming or borrowing them from someone else.

Age makes a significant difference in how youth get their cigarettes; younger youth were more likely to bum them or take them and older youth were more likely

to buy them from a store themselves or to get someone else to buy the cigarettes for them (with their own money).

There was no significant difference between sexes and how they got their cigarettes, but females were slightly more likely to get someone to buy their

cigarettes or to borrow them; and males were more likely to buy them from a store themselves.

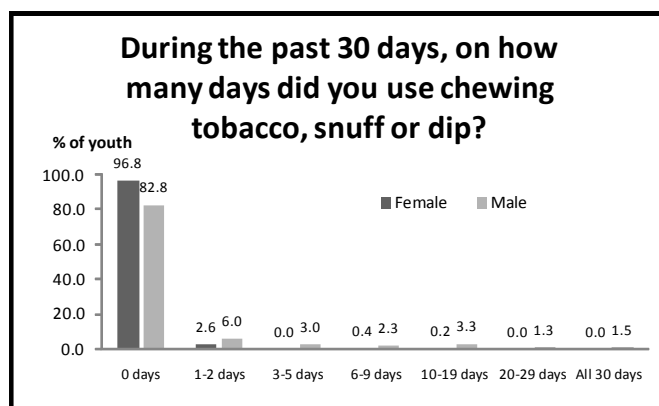
Males three times more likely than females to use chewing tobacco snuff or dip.

Less than 10% of youth across all age groups used chewing tobacco over the past month.

The number of youth using chewing tobacco increases with age. Less than 3% of youth 12 years old and younger used chewing tobacco in the past month, however 16% of youth 17 years and older used it.

Age is also a significant factor in the frequency of use; older youth used chewing tobacco on more days of the past month.

There was a significant difference between males and females and chewing tobacco use. Males were three times more likely to have used chewing tobacco over the past month, and males were more likely to chew more often.



Chewing tobacco use was significantly related ($p < 0.05$) to the number of sports teams a student played on during the year, youth who participate on sports teams are more likely to be chewing tobacco.

"I think guys are getting into chewing tobacco and girls are sticking to smoking. I see more girls smoking and I see all the guys that used to smoke chewing now." - Youth Focus Group Participant

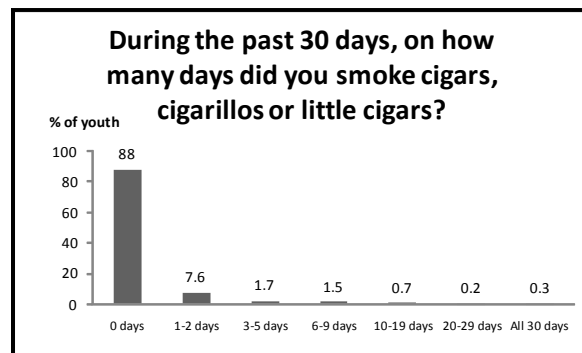
"And all the guys are like, yeah, if I ever saw a girl chew I would think she was the nastiest." -

Youth Focus Group Participant

Males more likely to smoke cigars, cigarillos or little cigars

Less than 15% of youth across all age groups smoked cigars over the past month. The number of youth smoking cigars increases with age; while about 22% of youth 17 years and older smoked cigars, less than three percent of youth 12 years and younger did.

There was a significant difference between sexes. Males were more likely to have smoked cigars over the past month, and on more days throughout the month.



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*"...I was thinking more like **** was thinking. I thought more people would be chewing than smoking. It seems to me like it would be easier to get away with too cause people can see you smoking or whatever." - Youth Focus Group Participant*

Almost 2/3 of youth smokers tried to quit in the past 12 months

Almost 2/3 of the youth who had smoked in the past month reported that they had tried to quit smoking in the last 12 months.

Youth who smoked more days in the past month, were more likely to report that

they had tried to quit.

There are no significant differences between males and female or between youth of different ages in their stated desire to quit smoking.

This high percentage reporting trying to quit suggests

that smoking cessation programs may be valuable for youth in their schools.

During the past 12 months, did you ever try to quit smoking cigarettes?

