

US smoking rates hit record low

8 November 2018



(HealthDay)—Cigarette smoking rates have dropped to the lowest level ever recorded, U.S. health officials reported Thursday.

"This new all-time low in cigarette [smoking](#) among U.S. adults is a tremendous public health accomplishment—and it demonstrates the importance of continued proven strategies to reduce smoking," CDC Director Robert Redfield said in an agency news release.

Among adult smokers, the smoking rate fell from 15.5 percent in 2016 to 14 percent in 2017. That rate was 67 percent lower than it was in 1965.

Among young adults (aged 18 to 24), the rate fell from 13 percent in 2016 to 10 percent in 2017, according to the report.

"Despite this progress, work remains to reduce the harmful health effects of [tobacco](#) use," Redfield added.

Matthew Myers, president of the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, agreed.

"Despite our progress, tobacco use still kills more than 480,000 Americans and costs \$170 billion in health care expenses each year," Myers said in a news release from the advocacy group.

He said full implementation of key initiatives—higher tobacco taxes, comprehensive smoke-free laws, hard-hitting mass media campaigns, and raising the smoking age to 21—could lower rates further still.

The report found that one in five adults used a tobacco product in 2017, including smoked, smokeless and electronic tobacco products. Among adults with serious psychological distress, two in five used tobacco products.

Cigarettes were the most commonly used tobacco product (14 percent) among adults, followed by: cigars, cigarillos, or filtered little cigars (3.8 percent); e-cigarettes (2.8 percent); smokeless tobacco (2.1 percent); and pipes, water pipes, or hookahs (1 percent).

Of the 47 million U.S. [adults](#) who use any [tobacco products](#), about 9 million (19 percent) use two or more. The most common tobacco product combination was cigarettes and e-cigarettes.

The report was published in the CDC's Nov. 9 *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*.

About 16 million Americans currently have a smoking-related illness, the CDC researchers noted.

Dr. Norman Sharpless, director of the U.S. National Cancer Institute, said: "For more than half a century, cigarette smoking has been the leading cause of cancer [death] in the United States. Eliminating smoking in America would, over time, eliminate about one-third of all cancer deaths."

More information: The American Heart Association has more on [quitting smoking](#).

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APA citation: US smoking rates hit record low (2018, November 8) retrieved 31 October 2022 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2018-11-us-smoking-rates-hit-record.html>

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