

Tobacco Use and Environmental Tobacco Smoke

Cigarette smoking is the leading cause of preventable death and disease. Passive or secondhand smoke (ETS, environmental tobacco smoke) is the third leading cause of preventable death in the United States. Nearly one in five deaths in the United States each year is attributable to cigarette smoking. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control & Prevention estimates that health costs caused by smoking are \$10.28 per pack of cigarettes sold and consumed in the United States.

KEY FACTS

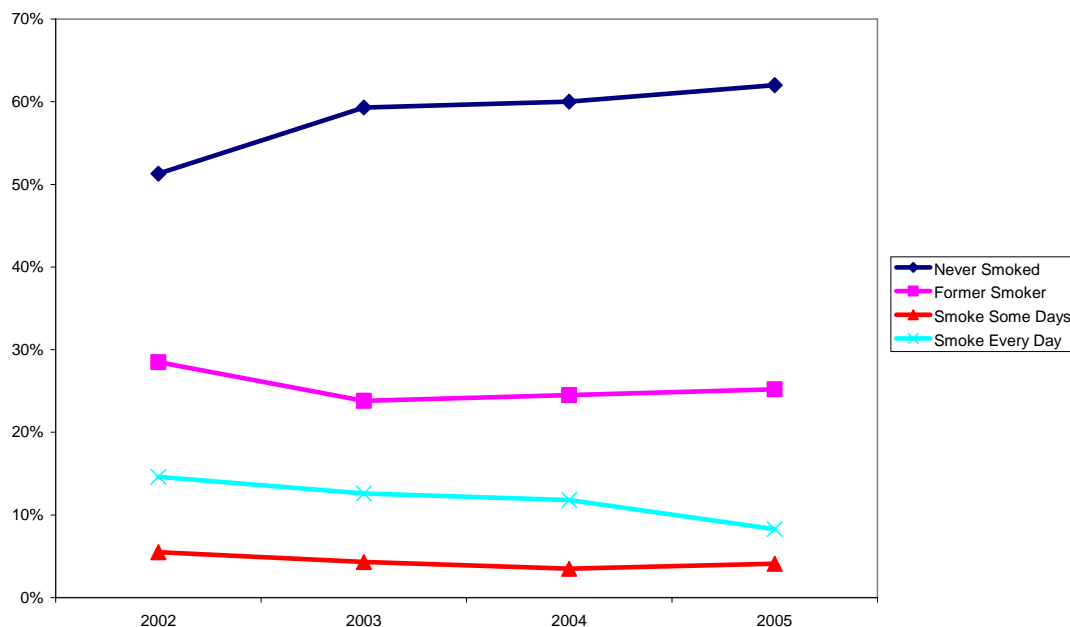
National Data on the Impact of Cigarette Smoking

- About half of all deaths attributable to cigarette smoking are from various cancers (lung, throat, etc.). Other chronic, life-limiting diseases caused by smoking include heart disease, emphysema, and stroke.
- For every eight smokers that die, one additional person dies from ETS exposure. ETS causes an estimated 3,000 deaths annually from lung cancer alone.
- ETS exacerbates asthma in children and contributes to higher rates of respiratory infections. ETS causes low birth weight among infants whose mothers were exposed to ETS.
- The health risks associated with ETS cannot be eliminated by segregating smokers and non-smokers, using ventilation systems, or other air cleaning technology because ETS exposure at any level creates health risks.

Smoking Prevalence in Johnson County Reflects Good and Bad News

- Smoking rates among Johnson County adults have slowly declined since 2002 and are lower than statewide levels. Among adults who report smoking “every day” or “some days”, the percent has decreased from 20.1 percent in 2002 to 12.5 percent in 2005 while the statewide rate declined from 22.1 percent to 17.8 percent.

Cigarette Usage Among Johnson County Adults



- Tobacco use among Johnson County 8th, 10th and 12th graders has also declined in recent years, but is consistently higher than the statewide rate in some age groups. Tobacco is considered a “gateway drug” because youth who report current tobacco use are three times more likely to use alcohol and eight times more likely to smoke marijuana than non-cigarette smokers.

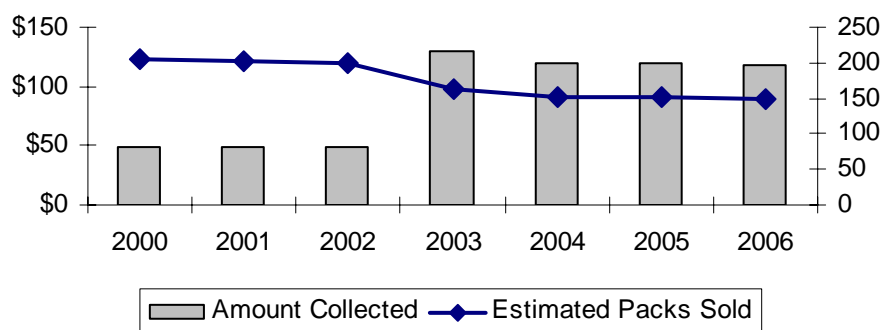
- One-third of Johnson County youth report that it is “very easy” to obtain cigarettes. Perception of availability increases the risk that adolescents will use tobacco (or other illegal substances).

Reduce Tobacco Consumption and Improve the Health of our Community

Several strategies are currently in place to lower tobacco consumption. These strategies target adults, access to tobacco products among minors, and lowering exposure to ETS.

- Adult tobacco consumption. In 2003, the Kansas Legislature more than tripled the tax imposed on the sale of a pack of cigarettes, from \$.24 to \$.79 per pack. This legislation simultaneously increased cigarette tax collections by more than two-and-a-half times, and decreased cigarette sales by 18 percent.

Tax Revenue Generated and the Number of Packs Sold (in millions)



- Youth tobacco access. Tobacco product sales to minors—those under age 18—is illegal. In 2004 the rate of retailers selling tobacco products to minors reached 38 percent or nearly two in five of compliance checks sales by law enforcement. Heightened enforcement and public awareness have improved compliance rates since 2004.
- Smoking Cessation. Within one year of quitting smoking, the risk to former smokers of heart attack and heart disease is cut in half; health benefits are even greater for those under age 50 who quit. The Kansas Tobacco Quitline—1.866.KANSTOP—was established in 2003 in partnership with the Kansas Dept. of Health & Environment and the American Cancer Society. The Quitline, a free service available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, links smoking cessation counselors with callers. During the 18 months ending November 2006, the Quitline received 2,901 calls from tobacco users, with nearly 1,800 persons enrolling in the program.
- Local policies and community norms. Smoke-free workplaces are associated with declines in smoking prevalence among adults and youth. In Johnson County, County Government and seven cities have passed more restrictive smoking ordinances, and two other cities are studying similar action. In Kansas, 31 school districts have adopted “tobacco-free school grounds” policies as part of a comprehensive effort to reduce tobacco consumption while reinforcing education and prevention efforts in the schools. Model policies prohibit tobacco use on all school grounds and school-owned property by staff students and visitors and tobacco-related advertising and marketing; and also include enforcement activities.

SOURCES: American Heart Association; Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System; Communities That Care, Student Surveys, 2000-2006; Kansas Dept. of Health & Environment; Kansas Dept. of Revenue; U.S. Centers for Disease Control & Prevention; U.S. Environmental Protection Agency; U.S. Surgeon General.

CONTACT INFORMATION

May 2007

United Community Services of Johnson County

12351 West 96th Terrace, Suite 200, Lenexa, KS 66215
 913/438-4764 www.ucsjoco.org