



## The Facts about Smoking and Women

The statistics surrounding women and tobacco are staggering:

- Cigarette smoking kills an estimated 178,000 women in the United States annually.<sup>1</sup>
- The three leading smoking-related causes of death in women are lung cancer (45,000), heart disease (40,000) and chronic lung disease (42,000).<sup>1</sup>
- More than 80 percent of all lung cancer deaths in women smokers are attributable to smoking.<sup>2</sup> Since 1950, lung cancer deaths among women have increased by more than 600 percent. By 1987, lung cancer had surpassed breast cancer as the leading cause of cancer-related deaths in women.<sup>2</sup>
- Women who smoke have an increased risk for other cancers, including cancers of the oral cavity, pharynx, larynx (voice box), esophagus, pancreas, kidney, bladder, and uterine cervix.<sup>2</sup> Women who smoke double their risk for developing coronary heart disease and increase by more than tenfold their likelihood of dying from chronic obstructive pulmonary disease.<sup>2,3</sup>
- An estimated 18.5 percent of adult U.S. women age 18 years or older (slightly less than 1 of 5) are current cigarette smokers.<sup>4</sup> Cigarette smoking estimates for women by age are as follows: 18–24 years (21.5 percent), 25–44 years (21.4 percent), 45–64 years (19.8 percent), and 65 years or older (8.1 percent).<sup>4</sup>
- Prevalence of cigarette smoking is highest among women who are American Indians or Alaska Natives (28.5 percent), followed by whites (20.4 percent), African Americans (17.2 percent), Hispanics (10.9 percent), and Asians [excluding Native Hawaiians and other Pacific Islanders] (4.8 percent).<sup>4</sup>

### Smoking Cessation Treatment

Nicotine is one of the hardest substance use dependencies to break. According to HHS 70% of smokers want to quit but fewer than 7% who try to quit remain smoke-free for 1 year thereafter.

National CDC guidelines<sup>5</sup> recommend comprehensive smoking cessation benefits, including:

- Both counseling and medications including prescription and over the counter cessation aids.
- At least four counseling sessions of at least 30 minutes.
- Elimination or minimization of co-pays and deductibles for treatment.

---

<sup>1</sup> CDC. *Cigarette Smoking Among Adults—United States, 2004.* ( PDF - 287k) *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report* 2005;54(44):1121–1124.

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *Women and Smoking: A Report of the Surgeon General.* Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Public Health Service, CDC, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health; 2001. Accessed: May 2004.

<sup>3</sup> Novotny TE, Giovino, GE. Tobacco use. In: Brownson RC, Remington PL, Davis JR (eds). *Chronic Disease Epidemiology and Control*, 2nd ed. Washington, DC: American Public Health Association, 1998. pp. 117–148.

<sup>4</sup> CDC. *Cigarette Smoking Among Adults—United States, 2004.* ( PDF - 287k) *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report* 2005;54(44):1121–1124.

<sup>5</sup> Fiore MC, Bailey WC, Cohen SJ, et al. *Treating Tobacco Use and Dependence.* *Clinical Practice Guideline.* Rockville, MD: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Public Health Service. June 2000.