



AFRICAN AMERICANS AND SMOKING CESSATION

Smoking has established itself as a health issue of major concern in the African-American community. Close to 25% of all African-American adults and about one of every five African-American high school students are current smokers.¹ In addition, smoking related illnesses are the number one cause of death in the African-American community, surpassing all other causes of death, including AIDS, homicide, diabetes, and accidents.²

Despite these high smoking rates among African Americans, research has shown that African-American smokers tend to think that smoking is socially unacceptable, and are highly motivated to quit.³ In fact, seventy percent of current African-American smokers want to quit.⁴ Unfortunately, African-American smokers face many barriers to smoking cessation, including high levels of nicotine dependence, and a lack of personalization of the health effects of smoking.⁵

As a consequence of these perceived barriers and a general lack of tailored cessation programs, African-American smokers tend to be less successful than white smokers at quitting.⁶ While African-American smokers are more likely than white smokers to have quit for at least one day in the previous year, the percentage of African-American smokers who have successfully quit smoking is lower than among whites (50.5% vs. 35.4%).⁷ It has been suggested that African Americans may have lower cessation rates than whites because African Americans have higher nicotine dependence, possibly due to the preference for mentholated cigarettes.⁸

Some Proven Methods to Help African-American Smokers Quit Successfully⁹

Research studies on smoking cessation among African Americans have found that:

- Physician counseling accompanied by specially tailored print materials work effectively to help African-American smokers quit.¹⁰
- Church-based cessation programs seem to have a unique effectiveness in the African-American community.¹¹ To be most effective, such community and church-based programs should include one-on-one counseling, culturally appropriate self-help materials, and community wide activities, which seek to communicate effective cessation guidelines.¹²
- Cigarette price increases prevent and reduce smoking especially well among African Americans, youths, males, and persons in low-income households.¹³
- Price increases are the most powerful anti-smoking factor among all youths. In addition, enforcing laws that prohibit sales of cigarettes to kids have been found to be especially effective in reducing smoking among African-American teens.¹⁴

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Related Campaign Fact Sheets (available at www.tobaccofreekids.org)

Tobacco Use Among African Americans

Tobacco Use & Ethnicity

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- ¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) "Cigarette Smoking Among Adults – United States, 1998," *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR)*, 2000 October 6, 49(39): 881-4. See, also, CDC, *Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance Survey (YRBS)*, 1993, 1997, 1999.
- ² American Heart Association (AHA), *African Americans and Cardiovascular Diseases Biostatistical Fact Sheet, 1998*, www.americanheart.org/statistics/biostats/bioafr.htm. See, also, American Cancer Society (ACS), "Leading Causes of Death Among African Americans, US, 1997," *Cancer Facts and Figures For African Americans, 2000 Statistics*, www.cancer.org or www3.cancer.org/cancerinfo/sitecenter.asp?ct=1&ctid=8&scp=8.1.1.40001&scs=2&scss=1&scdoc=42104&pnt=2&language=english.
- ³ Royce J, et al., "Smoking cessation factors among African Americans and Whites. COMMIT Research Group," *American Journal of Public Health*, 1993 February, 83(2): 220-6.
- ⁴ CDC, "Smoking Cessation During Previous Year Among Adults – United States, 1990 and 1991," *MMWR*, 1993 July 9, 42(26): 504-507; HHS, 1998.
- ⁵ Shervington D, "Attitudes and practices of African-American women regarding cigarette smoking: implications for interventions," *Journal of the National Medical Association*, 1994 May, 86(5): 337-43.
- ⁶ Shervington D, 1994 May. Royce J, et al., "Smoking cessation factors among African Americans and Whites. COMMIT Research Group," *American Journal of Public Health*, 1993 February, 83(2): 220-6.
- ⁷ Shervington D, 1994 May. Royce J, et al., 1993 February.
- ⁸ Royce J, et al., 1993 February. For more on African Americans and menthol cigarettes, see the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids (CFTFK) fact sheet, *Tobacco Use Among African Americans*. Campaign fact sheets are at <http://tobaccofreekids.org/research/factsheets/>.
- ⁹ For more information about cessation programs and tobacco issues specific to African-American communities, see <http://www.onyx-group.com/Cessation.htm>.
- ¹⁰ See, e.g., Lipkus I, et al., "Using tailored interventions to enhance smoking cessation among African Americans at a community health center," *Nicotine and Tobacco Research*, 1999 March, 1(1): 77-85. See, also, Royce J, et al., "Physician- and nurse-assisted smoking cessation in Harlem," *Journal of the National Medical Association*, 1995 April, 87(4): 291-300.
- ¹¹ See, e.g., Pederson L, et al., "Smoking cessation among African Americans: what we know and do not know about the interventions and self-quitting," *Preventive Medicine*, 2000 July, 31(1): 28-38. Schorling J, et al., "A trial of church-based smoking cessation interventions for rural African Americans," *Preventive Medicine*, 1997 January-February, 26(1): 92-101.
- ¹² Schorling, op. cit. For a list of websites providing cessation assistance, see the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids website at <http://tobaccofreekids.org/research/webresources/quitting.shtml>.
- ¹³ CDC, "Responses to Cigarette Prices By Race/Ethnicity, Income, and Age Groups – United States 1976-1993," *MMWR*, 1998 July 31, 47(29): 605-609. See, also, Chaloupka, F. & R. Pacula, "An Examination of Gender and Race Differences in Youth Smoking Responsiveness to Price and Tobacco Control Policies," *National Bureau of Economic Research*, Working Paper 6541, 1998 April, www.uic.edu/~fjc/.
- ¹⁴ CDC, 1998 July 31. Chaloupka, F. & R. Pacula, 1998 April.