



LGBTQ TOBACCO USE FACT SHEET

Higher Rates of Tobacco Use

LGBTQ tobacco use rates are 40% higher than others.⁴ LGBTQ people use a wide variety of tobacco products, including: cigarettes, cigars, cigarillos, smokeless tobacco products (chewing tobacco, snuff), dissolvables, e-cigarettes & water pipes (hookah).¹

Cigarettes Approximately 1 in 5 LGB adults smoke cigarettes compared to around 1 in 6 heterosexual adults.⁵ For transgender people this number has been reported to be as high more than 1 in 3.⁶

Other Tobacco Products 17.5% of lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth currently use electronic vapor products compared to 13.2% of heterosexual youth.⁷ Adolescents and young adults who had ever used e-cigarettes were more than three times as likely to start smoking than those who had never used e-cigarettes.⁸

Transgender people have 3.5 times higher odds of past 30-day cigar use and 5 times higher odds of past 30-day e-cigarette use compared to cisgender people.⁹

One study found that of LGB people were more than twice as likely to have ever smoked a water pipe (such as hookah) compared to heterosexual people.¹⁰

Health Risks of Tobacco Use

Tobacco use causes various types of cancer, including cancer of the lung, larynx, mouth, esophagus, throat, bladder, kidney, liver, stomach, pancreas, colon, rectum, and cervix. Those who use smoke less tobacco are at an increased risk of mouth cancer, esophagus cancer, and pancreatic cancer.³

Tobacco is the leading cause for cancer and death from cancer. No level of tobacco use is safe.²



Targeted Marketing of the LGBTQ Communities

- Tobacco companies have a long history of targeting LGBTQ communities through event sponsorships, bar promotions, giveaways, and advertising at Pride festivals and other LGBTQ community events.¹¹ Additionally, advertisements in LGBTQ publications depict use of tobacco as a normal part of life for the LGBTQ community.¹²
- LGBTQ people are more than twice as likely to have been exposed to e-cigarette content than non-LGBTQ people on social media and internet platforms, including Facebook, Youtube, Twitter, and Tumblr in the past 30 days compared to non-LGBTQ people.¹³

Differential Risks of Tobacco Use Within the LGBTQ Communities

Stigma LGB people who experienced high levels of sexual orientation discrimination had a much greater probability of past-year cigarette smoking, any tobacco/nicotine use, and tobacco use disorder compared to LGB people who experienced lower levels or no sexual orientation discrimination.¹⁷

Youth LGB youth smoke cigarettes at double the rate of their peers and vape at rates higher than their peers.¹⁹

Mental Illness People with mental illnesses, who are disproportionately LGBTQ,¹⁵ have higher lifetime smoking rates compared to those without mental illness.¹⁶

Race One study showed that Black LGB people had the highest prevalence of cigar/little cigar/clove cigarette smoking compared to other races. Additionally, the prevalence of Black LGB who smoke is three times higher than non-LGB African Americans.¹⁴

Hispanic, Asian, and Multiracial LGB people all had higher prevalences of cigarette, hookah & cigar/little cigar/ clove cigarette smoking than non LGB people.

HIV Tobacco and HIV have a synergistic effect with each other; research shows if an HIV+ person is stable on antivirals, they will lose more years of their life from smoking than from HIV.¹⁸

Quitting Tobacco

- LGBTQ people are motivated to quit smoking for a number of reasons, including to feel more like their ideal selves, to improve the health of their lungs, to increase their lifespan, and to meet the approval of partners and other important people in their life.²⁰
- Quitting smoking, no matter what age, can substantially increase life expectancy compared to those who continue to smoke.²¹



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