

YOUTH TOBACCO USE ON GUAM

Quick Facts

- Smoking is highest among those with the lowest income and the least education. Never having smoked is highest among the richest and most educated on Guam.
- Among youth, the good news is that smoking appears to be declining. High school smoking rates decreased in 2003 and remained stable in 2005. Middle school smoking rates decreased for the first time in 2005. These are closely linked to policy initiatives that have a direct and significant impact on tobacco use: the increase in tobacco taxes from \$0.07/pack to \$1.00/pack in 2003, and the smoke-free public places law (Natasha Act) in 2005.
- The bad news is that youth smoking rates on Guam are still over 30% higher than youth smoking rates in the US mainland.
- More Guam youth, per capita, have ever tried smoking, are current smokers, are frequent smokers and tried smoking a whole cigarette before the age of 13 than US youth.
- The use of other tobacco products, including chewing tobacco, and chewing tobacco with betel nut, are increasing among Guam youth regardless of gender, age or ethnicity.
- 4 out of 5 youth smokers want to quit.
- The top 3 causes of death on Guam---heart disease, cancer and strokes---are all caused by smoking.
- It is estimated that tobacco causes 1 death per day on Guam.
- 20% of litter collected on Guam's beaches and public lands in 2005 consisted of tobacco-related debris.
- The best ways to reduce tobacco use: raise taxes on tobacco, make all public places smoke-free, help smokers and chewers to quit, promote tobacco-free role models, reduce tobacco advertising and ban tobacco sponsorships.