



AFRICAN AMERICANS AND SMOKING CESSATION

Smoking has established itself as a health issue of major concern in the African American community. Currently, about one in five of all African American adults smoke¹ and one in ten African American high school students are current smokers.² 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.³

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.⁴ In fact, seventy percent of current African American smokers want to quit.⁵ Unfortunately, African American smokers face many barriers to smoking cessation, including high levels of nicotine dependence.⁶

As a consequence of these barriers and a general lack of tailored cessation programs, African American smokers tend to be less successful than white smokers at quitting.⁷ 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 percent vs. 35.4 percent).⁸ 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.⁹

Some Proven Methods to Help African-American Smokers Quit Successfully¹⁰

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.¹¹
- Church-based cessation programs seem to have a unique effectiveness in the African American community.¹² 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.¹³
- Cigarette price increases prevent and reduce smoking, especially among African Americans, youths, males, and persons in low-income households.¹⁴ 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.¹⁵
- The updated *Treating Tobacco Use and Dependence: 2008 Update—A Clinical Practice Guideline* of the U.S. Public Health Service (PHS) finds evidence supporting prescription medications, nicotine patch, counseling (in-person and telephone), tailored self-help materials, and biomedical feedback as effective treatments to help African Americans quit using tobacco.¹⁶

Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, November 16, 2009

Related Campaign Factsheets

- *African Americans and Tobacco Use*, <http://www.tobaccofreekids.org/research/factsheets/pdf/0006.pdf>
- *Tobacco Use & Ethnicity*, <http://www.tobaccofreekids.org/research/factsheets/pdf/0005.pdf>

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- ¹ U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), "Cigarette Smoking Among Adults - United States, 2008," *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR)* Vol. 58 No. 44, November 13, 2009. <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/PDF/wk/mm5844.pdf>
- ² CDC, "Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance – United States, 2007," *MMWR* 55(SS-4), June 6, 2008 http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/yrbs/pdf/yrbss07_mmwr.pdf.
- ³ 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.
- ⁴ Royce, J, et al., "Smoking cessation factors among African Americans and Whites. COMMIT Research Group," *American Journal of Public Health* 83(2):220-6, February 1993.
- ⁵ CDC, "Smoking Cessation During Previous Year Among Adults – United States, 1990 and 1991," *MMWR* 42(26):504-507, July 9, 1993; HHS, 1998.
- ⁶ Shervington, D, "Attitudes and practices of African-American women regarding cigarette smoking: implications for interventions," *Journal of the National Medical Association* 86(5):337-43, May 1994.
- ⁷ Shervington, D, May 1994. Royce, J, et al., February 1993.
- ⁸ Shervington, D, May 1994. Royce, J, et al., February 1993.
- ⁹ Royce, J, et al., February 1993. For more on African Americans and menthol cigarettes, see the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids (CFTFK) factsheet, *Tobacco Use Among African Americans*, <http://www.tobaccofreekids.org/research/factsheets/pdf/0006.pdf>.
- ¹⁰ For more information about cessation programs and tobacco issues specific to African-American communities, see <http://www.onyx-group.com/Cessation.htm>.
- ¹¹ 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* 1(1):77-85, March 1999. See, also, Royce, J, et al., "Physician- and nurse-assisted smoking cessation in Harlem," *Journal of the National Medical Association* 87(4):291-300, April 1995.
- ¹² 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* 31(1):28-38, July 2000. Schorling, J, et al., "A trial of church-based smoking cessation interventions for rural African Americans," *Preventive Medicine* 26(1):92-101, January-February 1997.
- ¹³ 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>.
- ¹⁴ CDC, "Responses to Cigarette Prices By Race/Ethnicity, Income, and Age Groups – United States 1976-1993," *MMWR* 47(29):605-609, July 31, 1998. See also, Chaloupka, F & Pacula, R, "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, April 1998, www.uic.edu/~fjc/.
- ¹⁵ CDC, July 31, 1998. Chaloupka, F & Pacula, R, April 1998.
- ¹⁶ Fiore MC, et al., *Treating Tobacco Use and Dependence: 2008 Update*, U.S. Public Health Service Clinical Practice Guideline, May 2008, http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/tobacco/treating_tobacco_use08.pdf