NYC Smoke-Free

TOBACCO DISPARITIES AMONG ASIAN AMERICANS IN NYC

While overall smoking rates across NYC have decreased, significant disparities still exist among certain populations, including the Asian American community. NYC Smoke-Free, a program of Public Health Solutions, works to ensure all communities have the resources they need to live healthy, smoke-free lives.

TOBACCO USE IS WIDESPREAD IN ASIAN AMERICAN COMMUNITIES

Smoking rates among Asian Americans, particularly Chinese American and Korean American men, continue to climb at a rapid pace, despite decreasing rates among the general population. Many Asian Americans emigrate from countries where smoking rates are high and smoking for men in particular is common. As a result, these cultural norms are ingrained in many Asian Americans' lives in NYC and across the nation.

- In 2015, Asian males had the highest rate of smoking among all ethnic groups in NYC
- 27% of Chinese American men smoke, compared to 4% of Chinese American women
- 22% of Korean American men smoke, compared to 16% of Korean American women
- In 2018, 7.1% of Asian American adults smoked
- 20% of Korean American adults smoked
- 16.3% of Vietnamese American adults smoked
- In 2021, about 13% of API adult New Yorkers currently smoke cigarettes, similar to NYC overall. However, API men are about six times more likely to smoke than API women
- One in nine API public high school students currently vapes
- Additionally smokeless tobacco products such as gutkha and paan play a significant role in API culture
- In 2022, 5.4% of Non-Hispanic Asian adults reported everyday or someday cigarette use.

ASIAN AMERICAN COMMUNITIES ARE RAMPANT WITH TOBACCO MARKETING

With smoking rates generally much higher in most Asian countries than they are in the US, tobacco companies have a long history of targeting marketing tactics towards Asian Americans. Through focused cultural campaigns and strategic ad placements, tobacco marketing is prevalent throughout Asian American communities.

- The tobacco industry is a long-time sponsor of Asian American Heritage month activities, including the Chinese New Year and Vietnamese New Year
- Tobacco advertisements on billboards and in stores are more abundant in predominantly urban Asian American communities than in other urban neighborhoods
- Tobacco companies support Asian American business associations and offer special retail sales materials

According to the Truth Initiative:

- Tobacco companies target Asian Americans because of their large population growth, high smoking prevalence in their countries of origin, increasing consumer power, and American brand loyalty towards smoking products
- Tobacco companies sponsor East Asian, Asian American, and Pacific Islander communities during cultural events and media in their country of origin language
- Billboards and advertisements are more prevalent in Urban Asian American communities, and they are less likely to have health warnings compared to predominantly white neighborhoods

Deadly Smoking-related Diseases Persist Among Asian Americans

Asian Americans are the nation's fastest growing racial or ethnic group, and now make up 14% of NYC's overall population. Despite this, NYC smoke-free policies and programs designed to reach this community are lacking and have been ineffective in engaging them and curbing smoking. As the number one cause of preventable disease, disability, and death, cigarette use has deadly impacts on Asian American communities.

The three leading causes of death among Asian Americans are heart disease, cancer, and stroke, all of which are strongly linked to smoking.

Menthol Cigarettes are on the Rise in Asian American Communities

Menthol cigarettes are an increasingly popular tobacco product among new and long-time smokers alike. Due to their cooling effect on the throat and mouth, they are easier to smoke and harder to quit than regular cigarettes. In Asian American communities, smokers are more likely to smoke menthol cigarettes than white Americans.

- 31% of Asian American smokers use menthol cigarettes — compared to 24%of white American smokers
- Over half of Asian American youth smokers report smoking menthol cigarettes
- In 2020, 25% of Asian/Pacific Islanders adults smoke menthol cigarettes

27% of Asians have high blood pressure

6.8% of Asians have heart disease

4.5% of Asians have coronary artery disease

Asian Americans have higher mortality rates and die at an earlier age, compared to White Americans