

DATA BRIEF

Philadelphia Department of Public Health

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Tobacco use among Philadelphia youth

- Each day, more than 3,200 U.S. kids and teens try their first cigarette, and 2,100 teens and young adults who have been occasional smokers become daily cigarette smokers.
- Nearly 90% of adult smokers begin smoking in their teens.
- Approximately one-third of all youth smokers will eventually die early from tobacco-related disease.
- One out of every ten Philadelphia teens uses tobacco.¹

Definitions

Youth: High school students in grades 9 -12

Ever smoked: Ever tried smoking cigarettes, even one or two puffs

Currently smoke: Smoked cigarettes on at least 1 day in past 30 days

Smoke frequently: Smoked cigarettes on 20 or more days in past 30 days

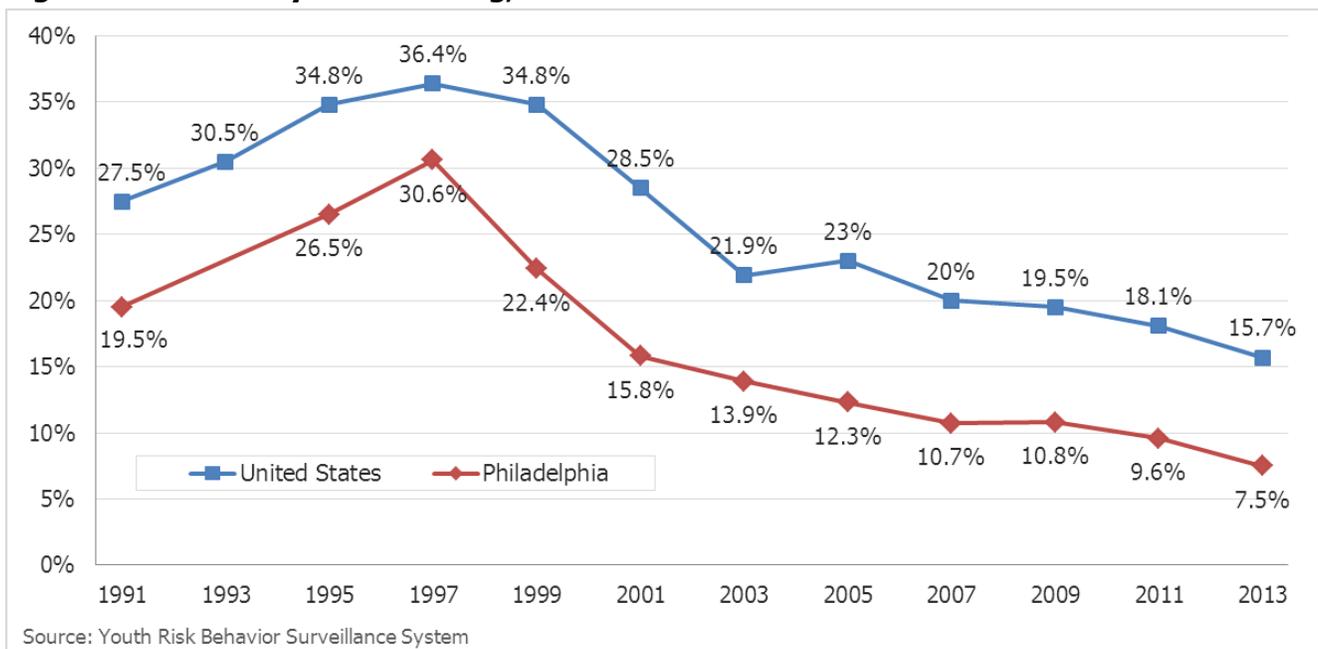
Smoke cigars/ cigarillos: Smoked cigar, cigarillo, or little cigar on at least 1 day in past 30 days

Use smokeless tobacco: Used chewing tobacco, snuff, or dip on at least 1 day in past 30 days

Trends over time^{1,2}

- Between 2007 and 2013, youth cigarette smoking in Philadelphia declined by 30% (Figure 1). During a similar time period (2008-2012), adult smoking in Philadelphia declined by 15%.
- Youth smoking peaked in 1997. Since then, Philadelphia has seen a larger decline in smoking than the U.S. as a whole—75% vs. 57%.
- While cigarette smoking has declined, use of cigars/cigarillos and smokeless tobacco has increased in Philadelphia (Figure 2). This may be due, in part, to the lower taxes on these products than cigarettes and their availability in small quantities. A two-pack of cigarillos is commonly available for \$1.

Figure 1. Trends in youth smoking, 1991-2013



Data sources

¹ **YRBSS:** The Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System is a biennial self-administered survey of public and private high school students, conducted nationally by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. For more survey details, visit: <http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/yrebs/index.htm>

² **HHS:** The Household Health Survey is a biennial survey of a random sample of adults in Southeastern Pennsylvania, conducted via telephone by the Public Health Management Company.

Characteristics of youth tobacco use^{1,2}

- 41.9% of Philadelphia teens have ever tried smoking cigarettes; 7.5% currently smoke; 2.6% smoke frequently.
- Cigar smoking is now more prevalent (8.6%) than cigarette smoking (7.5%) among Philadelphia youth (Figure 2). Four percent of youth use chewing tobacco, snuff, or dip.
- Boys are more likely to use all forms of tobacco, with the greatest difference in cigar/cigarillo use (10.1% vs. 6.8%).
- Whites are more likely than any other groups to engage in tobacco use behaviors (Figure 3). Youth tobacco use is generally lowest among blacks and Asians.
- Adult smoking rates are highest among blacks and Latinos, suggesting the onset of regular smoking among these populations may occur later than among whites.

More resources

- For more on youth smoking in Philadelphia, visit http://www.phila.gov/health/pdfs/The_Challenge_Youth_Smoking_812.pdf
- For CDC fact sheet on youth smoking, visit http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/fact_sheets/youth_data/tobacco_use/

Figure 2. Youth tobacco use, 1999-2013

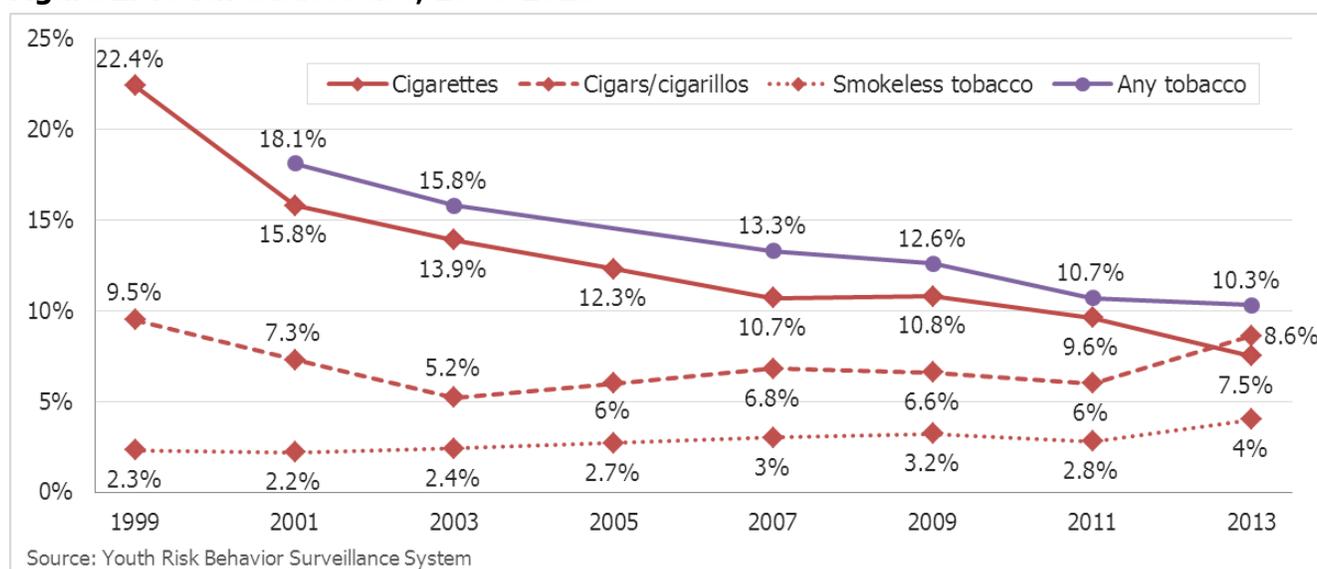


Figure 3. Youth tobacco use by race, 2013

