

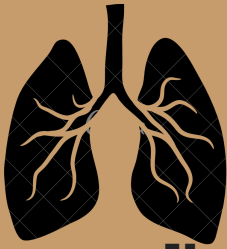
# THE IMPACT OF SMOKING ON LUNG HEALTH: A FOCUS ON RACIAL MINORITIES IN THE SOUTH

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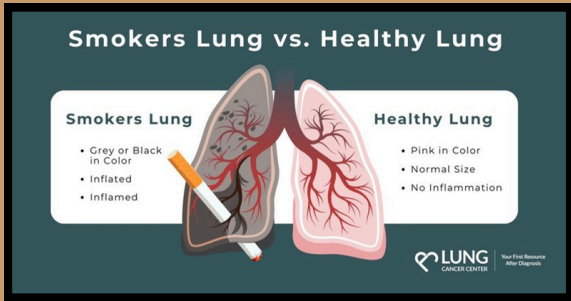
## Hidden dangers of smoking

- Smoking is the leading cause of lung diseases, including chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and lung cancer, which disproportionately affect racial minority groups<sup>1</sup>
- Smoking has many hidden dangers as well, including increased risk of heart disease, reproductive health issues, weakened immune system, vision problems, and various other cancers<sup>1</sup>

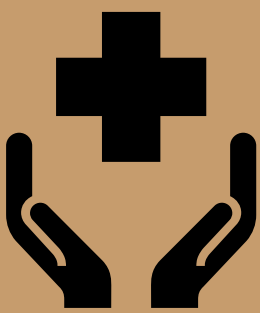


## Understanding the Risks and Benefits

- Black men in the U.S. are 11% more likely to be diagnosed with lung cancer and 9.8% more will die from lung cancer than the White population<sup>7</sup>
- Tar and other chemicals found in cigarettes greatly damage lung tissue, resulting in a darkened lung appearance<sup>8</sup>



- After quitting smoking, the body begins its recovery process where within weeks of quitting, lung function and circulation improves and after a year of quitting, the risk of developing heart disease decreases by 50%<sup>9</sup>
- Tailored services, helplines, and support from loved ones can help make smoking cessation an easier process<sup>10</sup>



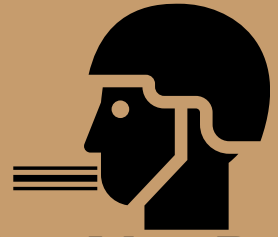
## Where to Find Help

- Talk to your health care provider about smoking cessation<sup>6</sup>
- Join nicotine replacement therapy and support group classes<sup>6</sup>
- The American Lung Association has online advice programs on smoking cessation<sup>6</sup>
- Call the National Cancer Quitline at 877-448-7848<sup>6</sup>
- Each state has a quit call line  
CALL 1-800-QUIT-NOW  
(1-800-784-8669)<sup>6</sup>



## Smoking Statistics

- Smoking is the leading cause of preventable disease and death in the United States, killing more than 480,000 Americans each year<sup>2</sup>
- In 2021, an estimated 11.5% (28.3 million) of U.S. adults were current smokers<sup>2</sup>
- Life expectancy for smokers is at least 10 years shorter than for nonsmokers<sup>3</sup>
- Quitting smoking before the age of 40 reduces the risk of dying from smoking-related disease by about 90%<sup>3</sup>



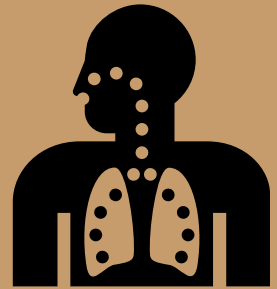
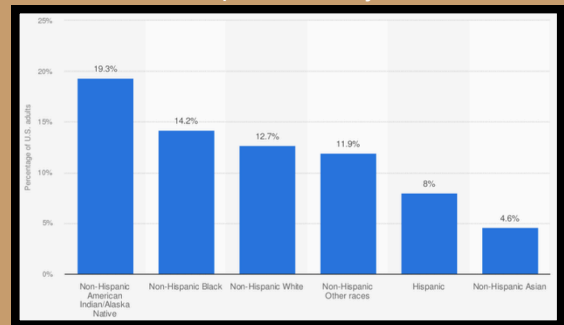
## How Smoking Damages Your Lungs

- Smoking can damage the lungs by filling respiratory airways with harmful chemicals, like tar and carbon monoxide, leading to the deterioration of delicate tissue and cilia<sup>12</sup>
- Damaged tissue is thicker and less flexible, limiting the lung's capability to expand which lowers overall oxygen intake<sup>13</sup>



## Unequal Burden on Racial Minorities

- Smoking prevalence among African American adults is significantly higher compared to White adults in many southern states<sup>10</sup>
- Limited access to healthcare, targeted tobacco marketing, and systemic inequities further exacerbate this disparity<sup>10</sup>
- In 2024, an estimated 10% of non-Hispanic Black youth currently used tobacco product, compared with 7.8% of non-Hispanic White youth<sup>11</sup>
- An estimated 2.2% of non-Hispanic Black youth currently used cigars, compared with 0.9% of non-Hispanic White youth<sup>11</sup>



## Steps to Prevent Tobacco Use

- Education: Teach risks of tobacco use early in schools and communities<sup>4</sup>
- Policy Support: Advocate for smoke-free environments and increased tobacco taxes<sup>5</sup>
- Positive Alternatives: Promote healthy coping mechanisms and recreational activities<sup>5</sup>
- Hotlines: Share numbers like 1-800-QUIT-NOW and provide tools like SmokeFree.gov<sup>4</sup>
- Encourage consultations for personalized plans
- Youth Focus: Start anti-tobacco campaigns in elementary schools
- Parental Guidance: Equip parents to model and discuss healthy habits
- Support Systems: Provide peer groups or mentors for ongoing encouragement

## Resources

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