

## Smoking stats more startling than expected

Written by Holyoke Enterprise

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Despite the negative health implications of smoking tobacco, millions of people continue to light up each and every day. While past generations may have been able to claim ignorance as to the effects smoking has on the body, nowadays ignorance is no excuse.

Information from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention indicate that around 20 percent of Americans over the age of 18 currently smoke. Thousands of people lose their lives to health problems due to cigarette smoking every year.

Roughly 10 million cigarettes are sold every minute around the world, and CBS News Canada reports men and women age 18 to 34 are the segment of society most likely to smoke, as 28 percent of people in that age bracket smoke tobacco. Rehashing the effects of smoking on the body may help to inspire a new crop of smokers to quit.

—Most lung cancer cases are attributed to cigarette smoking. Information from [ReadytoQuit.com](http://ReadytoQuit.com) indicates 90 percent of lung cancer cases in men and 80 percent in women can be traced back to smoking.

—Coronary heart disease is the leading cause of death in the United States and the leading smoking-related cause of death.

—Cigarette smoking has been identified as the most important source of preventable morbidity and premature mortality around the world.

—Smoking-related diseases cause an estimated 440,000 American deaths each year, and tobacco kills an estimated 45,000 Canadians a year, says the Canadian Lung Association.

—A 2004 Study by the CDC's National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion found that cigarette smoke contains more than 4,800 chemicals, 69 of which are known to cause cancer.

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—A study published in the New England Journal of Medicine found nonsmokers exposed to secondhand smoke were 25 percent more likely to have coronary heart disease compared to nonsmokers not exposed to smoke.

—Improvements in breathing ability and lung health can begin as early as 72 hours after quitting smoking. After nine months, smoking-related coughing, congestion and shortness of breath should slow and cease. After one year, risk of coronary heart decreases by 50 percent.

There are many avenues for quitting smoking. Talk with a doctor about medical and nonmedical intervention to find a plan that works.

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