

# Young Adult Smoking Behavior: Implications for Future Population Health

Elizabeth A. Gilpin, MS; Victoria M. White, PhD; Martha M. White, MS;  
John P. Pierce, PhD

---

**Objective:** To qualitatively project the future health burden of tobacco from present-day young adult smoking behavior. **Methods:** Population surveys in California (2002) and nationally (1978-80, 2001-03). **Results:** In 2002, 40% of California young adult smokers were nondaily smokers, 24% had quit at some time for  $\geq 6$  months, 45% said they smoked less now than previously, and 68% thought they would quit within 5 years.

Interest in quitting was high, and most were actively engaged in the smoking cessation process. Young adult smoking behavior changed from 1978-80 to 2001-03. **Conclusion:** The future health burden from smoking will be less for the current generation of young adults.

**Key words:** smoking, young adults, smoking initiation, smoking cessation

*Am J Health Behav.* 2009;33(5):569-580

---