

UK SMOKING STATISTICS

- About 13 million adults in the UK smoke cigarettes - 29% of men and 25% of women. In 1974, 51% of men and 41% of women smoked cigarettes - nearly half the adult population of the UK. Now just over one-quarter smoke, but the decline in recent years has been heavily concentrated in older age groups: i.e., almost as many young people are taking up smoking but more established smokers are quitting.
- Smoking is highest among those aged 20-34: 35% of men and women in this age group smoke. Among older age groups prevalence gradually declines with the lowest smoking rate among people aged 60 and over: 16% smoke in this age group.
- Men and women in the unskilled manual socio-economic group are more likely to smoke than people in the professional group. 15% of men and 13% of women in the professional group smoke compared with 39% of men and 34% of women in the unskilled manual group.
- People do give up - 20% of women and 27% of men are ex-smokers. Surveys show that about 70% of current smokers would like to give up altogether.
- Every year, around 120,000 smokers in the UK die as a result of their habit
- Smoking kills around six times more people in the UK than road traffic accidents (3,391), other accidents (8,933), poisoning and overdose (3157), murder and manslaughter (495), suicide (4,485), and HIV infection (180) all put together (20,641 in total - 1999 figures).
- Smoking causes thirty per cent of all cancer deaths (including at least 80% of lung cancer deaths), 17% of all heart disease deaths and at least 80% of deaths from bronchitis and emphysema.
- Stopping smoking reduces this excess risk – stopping before age 35 can reduce a smoker's health risks to the same as those of a life-long non-smoker