

In Virginia, smoking rates vary by demographic group (see [table](#) & [chart](#)). Adults who have significantly higher smoking rates are likely to be:¹

- American Indian/Native American
- Young & middle-aged (< 65 years; especially 18-24 years old)
- Unemployed, unable to work
- Less educated (\geq 12 years of formal schooling)
- Low income
- Uninsured, underinsured
- Have a disability
- Stressed, binge drinking, previously diagnosed with anxiety/depression
- Physically inactive
- Have a chronic disease (e.g., asthma, diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease)

Between 2003 and 2008, smoking rates for certain groups changed as follows:²

- There were significant declines in smoking among men, whites, adults aged 25-64 years, middle-income earners, high school graduates, employed adults, and adults who binge drink, are physically inactive or have high blood pressure.
- Hispanics, high school dropouts, employed young adults, and adults with diabetes indicated a small, but not significant decline.
- Blacks, American Indians, the uninsured, and adults who are obese, have asthma or have heart disease indicate no change in smoking rates. See [table](#) & [chart](#).

At this time, there is little or no data to estimate smoking prevalence among certain populations in Virginia. Findings from national surveys and small group studies indicate that these groups have higher smoking prevalence rates:

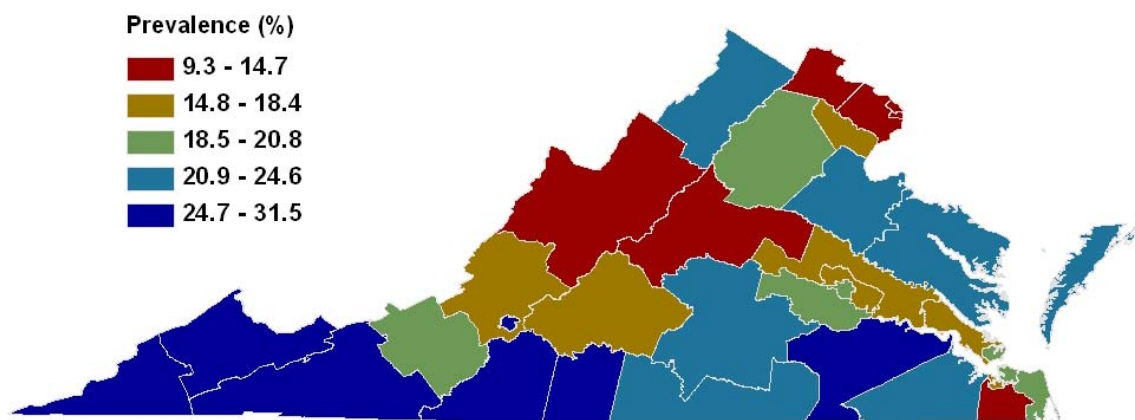
- LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender): smoking rates for lesbian, gay and bisexual adults range from 25% to 44% among different sub-groups.³
- Mental Health/Substance Abuse Problems: Persons with a previous or current diagnosis of mental illness were 1.5 to 2 times more likely to smoke than persons with no mental illness.⁴ Adults who abuse alcohol or other drugs also have high smoking rates.
- Homeless: 69% of homeless adults in the Richmond metro area smoke compared to 20% of non-homeless adults.⁵
- Military Personnel: 32% of active-duty military personnel and 22% of veterans smoke; smoking prevalence is over 50% higher among deployed vs. non-deployed military personnel; tobacco use affects short-term and long-term physical health and job performance, and contributes to injury and hospitalization.⁶
- Prison Population: Smoking rates are 3-4 times higher among adult offenders in states' corrections facilities.⁷ Tobacco use rates are also high among

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corrections staff.⁸ Youth offenders in Virginia have lifetime smoking prevalence rates 1.5-2 times higher than school-based samples.⁹

Certain districts in southwest and central Virginia have higher smoking rates compared to other districts (Figure 3).¹ Smoking prevalence rates ranged from 9.3% in Fairfax to 31.5% in Lenowisco. Crater, Pittsylvania-Danville, and Mount Rogers health districts also had high rates of smoking among adults.

Figure 1 - Percentage of Adults Who Currently Smoke, by Health District, Virginia, 2006-2008



Source: Virginia BRFSS. Prevalence estimates are population-weighted.

¹ Source: Virginia Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS). Data from 2006-2008 are combined for certain group comparisons. 95% confidence intervals are reported.

² Source: Virginia BRFSS, 2003, 2008. Percentages are weighted.

³ American Legacy Foundation, "Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) Communities and Smoking Fact Sheet", March 2009 (<http://www.legacyforhealth.org/>).

⁴ Lasser et al. [Smoking and mental illness: A population-based prevalence study](#). *JAMA* 2000;284(20):2606-2610.

⁵ Homeward, January 2009 point-in-time census, unpublished data (<http://www.homewardva.org/>).

⁶ IOM (Institute of Medicine). 2009. [Combating Tobacco Use in Military and Veteran Populations](#). Washington, DC: The National Academies Press.

⁷ Cropsey KL, Crews KM, Silberman SL. Relationship between smoking status and oral health in a prison population. *Journal of Correctional Health Care* 2006;12(4): 240-248.

⁸ Cropsey KL et al. Smoking characteristics of community corrections clients. *Nicotine & Tobacco Research* 2010;12(1):53-58

⁹ McGarvey E, Waite D, Bernheim RG, Linares C. *Prevalence of smoking among youth incarcerated in Virginia 1999-2003*. Presentation given at the American Public Health Association annual meeting, 2009. Data obtained from the Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice, Client Profile Database.