Many tribes use tobacco in a traditional way for ceremonial or medicinal purposes, such as healing ceremonies and offerings. Traditional tobacco use differs from commercial tobacco use. Commercial tobacco products are addictive and contain thousands of chemicals that harm the body due to regular use.

**Office of Minority Health and Health Equity**

**Fact Sheet**

**How common is commercial tobacco use in AI/AN populations?**

Since 1978, American Indians/Alaska Natives (AI/AN) have had the highest use of commercial tobacco compared to people of other races or ethnicities.

Among AI/AN populations:

- 1 in 2 young adults aged 18 to 25 years use tobacco
- 1 in 5 adults aged 18 and over smoke cigarettes
- 1 in 12 adults aged 18 and over use smokeless tobacco
- 1 in 6 women smoked during pregnancy
- Smoking prevalence is highest in the Northern Plains region (Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, North and South Dakota, Wisconsin, and Wyoming)

**Why should I quit?**

Stay healthy by not using commercial tobacco products and be a positive role model for your loved ones, family, and community.

- 2 weeks after quitting, your breathing improves
- In 1 year, your risk for a heart attack is cut in half
- In 5 years, your risk for a stroke is the same as a person who never smoked
- In 10 years, your risk of lung cancer is reduced by half
- To lower your cholesterol levels
- To lower your risk of developing type 2 diabetes
- To lower your risk for gum disease
- To avoid exposing your friends and family to secondhand and thirdhand smoke

**How do I quit?**

FDA-approved smoking cessation products can help you quit. Talk to your doctor or pharmacist to find a treatment that is right for you.

- **Over-the-counter nicotine replacement medications** may come in the form of skin patches, gum, lozenges, inhaler, or nasal spray.
- **Prescription products** are available through a prescription from your health care provider. These products may come in the form of pills, inhaler, or nasal spray.

**Where can I learn more?**

The Indian Health Service has information on tobacco prevention at: [www.ihs.gov/forpatients/healthtopics/TobaccoPrevention](http://www.ihs.gov/forpatients/healthtopics/TobaccoPrevention).

For resources to help you quit, visit: [www.smokefree.gov](http://www.smokefree.gov).

To speak with a smoking cessation counselor, call the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at: 1-800-Quit-Now (784-8669).

For more information on health equity, visit [www.fda.gov/healthequity](http://www.fda.gov/healthequity).

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The FDA, an agency within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, protects the public health by ensuring the safety, effectiveness, and security of human and veterinary drugs, vaccines and other biological products for human use, and medical devices. The agency also is responsible for the safety and security of our nation’s food supply, cosmetics, dietary supplements, and products that contain electronic radiation, and for regulating tobacco products.