

**Answers to
the most asked
questions
about
cigarettes.**

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15. Is it true that empty cigarette packs may be traded to the cigarette companies for time on a kidney dialysis machine?

No. There is no basis for this often heard rumor. Typically, word spreads that a certain number of packs will help provide such things as dialysis, open-heart surgery or time in an iron lung for a child or so many dollars toward the purchase of a wheelchair.

Cigarette companies have for many years made sizeable contributions to health research, education and social and cultural causes. But none of this corporate philanthropy involves redemption of empty packs.

16. Are the tobacco companies preparing to market marijuana if it's legalized?

No. Logic alone would demonstrate that cigarette makers, already faced with a controversy involving a fully legal product, would not enter an area with the legal and ethical sensitivities of marijuana. Despite rumors to the contrary, the companies do not own land on which to grow marijuana. Nor have they registered any marijuana trade names, such as "Acapulco Gold."

17. Do you have to be a smoker to work for The Tobacco Institute?

No. In fact, many Tobacco Institute employees choose not to smoke. The decision to smoke or not is and should remain a personal one to be made by the individual. The Institute believes that the individual's freedom to make that choice should not be regulated and it does not attempt to do so with its employees.

The Tobacco Institute offers this booklet in the belief that full and free discussion of important public issues is in the public interest.

1. Are more or less people smoking now?

Because of population growth, the *number* of adult Americans who choose to smoke is apparently larger than ever, but the incidence of smoking—the rate or percentage—is lower. Nearly 60 million Americans, or about a third of the adult population, smoke. The U.S. Public Health Service reports smoking incidence among men in 1981 at 36.7 percent and among women, 28.9 percent.

Teenage smoking has been declining among both boys and girls. According to the American Cancer Society, the incidence of smoking among teenagers is down 25 percent, to the lowest level since 1964. Among teenage girls, the smoking rate has decreased 17 percent since 1974, in boys 32 percent.

2. How many cigarettes are sold annually in the U.S.?

Approximately 628 billion cigarettes were purchased in 1981, an increase of 17 percent in the last decade. Government surveys indicate the average smoker smokes about a pack a day, men averaging a little more than women.

3. Does cigarette advertising cause kids to start smoking? If not, what does?

There are no pat answers. A director of the government's Office on Smoking and Health has said that people choose to smoke for a variety of reasons, but cigarette advertising is not what he called "the culprit." A recent Surgeon General's report said that responses from teenagers themselves indicate that peer pressure may be one of the major influences. Research by experts indicates that the pressure of peers is important, but so are many complex psychological, cultural and socioeconomic factors.

Teen smoking is down, though, and we're glad it is. Because we don't think kids should smoke, as you'll see in the next question.

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Meantime, please understand that cigarette advertising is not designed to induce people to start smoking, kids or anybody else, but to divide the already existing market by promoting brand identification and loyalty among people who are smokers. That advertising does *not* initiate smoking is obvious, witness several European countries that allow no advertising but see increasing sales. That it doesn't cause *kids* to smoke is indicated in the drop in teen smoking in this country while cigarette makers continue to promote their brands — to adult smokers.

4. Would you, as a tobacco industry employee, want your teenage son or daughter to smoke?

Most industry employees would tell you they'd prefer their children did not smoke. Smoking is an adult custom, like social drinking, staying up late, making one's own choice of what movies or TV shows to watch. Young persons should be urged *not* to smoke until and unless they have enough years, knowledge and experience in life to make mature and informed decisions.

5. Does cigarette smoke endanger non-smokers? What's the latest research?

Many people who want smoking banned or restricted in public places say that smoke in the atmosphere can cause disease in nonsmokers. These claims do not, however, stand up before scientific scrutiny.

Recently, for example, a Japanese study reporting that nonsmoking wives of smokers have a high risk of lung cancer got a lot of publicity. But the validity of the study was seriously questioned in the medical literature by a variety of experts around the world.

Within six months an American Cancer Society study covering 17 years and 200,000 people contradicted the Japanese study. The new research, by the society's statistical director, indicated that "second-hand" smoke has insignificant effect on lung cancer rates in nonsmokers.

12. Do the tobacco companies control the research they sponsor?

Absolutely not. Independent scientific advisors evaluate and fund research proposals by individuals and institutions. Awards are made with no strings attached and each researcher is free to publish study results, whatever they may be.

13. What about fires caused by the careless use of smoking materials?

Obviously, a single death or injury caused by careless smoking is one too many.

Some people have suggested that cigarettes could be made differently, so that they would go out when not being puffed. But the questions involved in producing a cigarette that could not, under any circumstances, cause a fire are incredibly complex. Happily, there has been some progress in this area — particularly in the development of fire- and smolder-resistant upholstered furniture.

The cigarette companies are continuing, along with other interested groups and individuals, to search for answers to the accidental fire problem.

14. Is there a tobacco subsidy?

There is no tobacco subsidy. There *is* a government *price support and production control* program that guarantees farmers a minimum price for their tobacco in return for strict limits on production. Similar programs do the same for 13 other commodities. But the money isn't a gift. It's a loan, repaid with interest.

In the 48 years since the price support program began, it has been the most successful farm program the government has ever had. While making loans of \$5.7 billion since 1933, the program shows a net loss on government books of only \$57 million. That amounts to just one-tenth of one percent of all losses for all commodity price support programs. During the same 48 years, tobacco product purchasers have paid federal, state and local treasuries more than \$136 billion in excise taxes.

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Today, cigarette excises represent nearly 4 percent of total state tax receipts—an important revenue source for financially strapped state governments. In 1981, the excise brought states nearly \$4 billion and municipalities an additional \$164 million. Since 1951, when the current federal excise was set, the average state cigarette tax rate has increased 340 percent.

Cigarette excises are regressive, taking a higher proportion of income from those with lower earnings than from those with greater incomes. Combined federal, state and local excises and sales taxes average 24 cents per pack, about 87 percent of the manufacturers' prices.

10. What is the economic contribution of tobacco?

The tobacco industry contributes mightily to the U.S. economy. Leaf is grown in 20 states on an estimated 276,000 farms. It is the sixth largest U.S. cash crop. The U.S. is also the leading exporter of tobacco and the largest importer. The result is a positive net contribution of more than \$1.9 billion per year to the U.S. international balance of payments. Americans spent \$23 billion for tobacco products in 1980.

11. What is the tobacco industry doing to help resolve the smoking and health controversy?

So far, the tobacco industry has committed more than \$100 million for independent research on smoking and health questions. In many years, industry awards exceeded that of any government department. They have always far exceeded the smoking and health research funding of all voluntary health associations, which regularly spend more of their donated funds for administration and public relations campaigns than for research. The tobacco industry remains committed to advancing scientific inquiry into the gaps in knowledge in the smoking controversy.

Much has been made by anti-smokers of a 1950 study in California claiming to show that exposure to cigarette smoke in the workplace reduces the lung function of nonsmokers. Those who quote this study as gospel, however, fail to take into account what one of the government's chief lung experts wrote in a guest editorial in the same journal issue. "The evidence that passive smoking in a general atmosphere has health effects," wrote Dr. Claude Lenfant of the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute, "remains sparse, incomplete and sometimes unconvincing." Two years later, it still is.

Another study commonly used in support of smoking restrictions involved the measurement of particulate matter in public buildings around Washington, D.C., by two researchers who then claimed that nonsmokers are exposed to "significant air pollution burdens from indoor smoking." No definitive piece here, either. Because the investigators measured no substance specific to tobacco smoke—like nicotine, for instance. Nor did they take any readings *before* the introduction of tobacco smoke. Their measurements, therefore, may simply reflect the amount of dust in the air and have little relevance so far as tobacco smoke is concerned.

No hard conclusions can be drawn about the effects, if any, of environmental cigarette smoke on the healthy nonsmoker. The issue is an emotional one. And emotion may cloud the perceptions and humors of those who dislike cigarette smoke.

Scientific studies on the nonsmoker question continue, as they should.

6. Is it true that sidestream smoke that drifts off the end of the cigarette contains far greater quantities of smoke constituents than mainstream smoke drawn from the cigarette by the smoker?

All constituents of cigarette smoke—including tar, nicotine and carbon monoxide—are immediately diluted by the surrounding air.

Measurements of atmospheric cigarette smoke taken under *realistic conditions* indicate that the contribution of tobacco smoke to the air we breathe is minimal. One study at Harvard found only

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very small amounts of nicotine in the atmosphere of cocktail lounges, restaurants, bus stations and airline terminals. Based on those measurements of a substance *specific* to tobacco smoke, one astute reader of the literature estimated that a nonsmoker would have to spend 100 hours straight in the smokiest bar to inhale the equivalent of a single filtertip cigarette.

Levels of carbon monoxide (CO) are affected by many factors—cooking and heating equipment, motor vehicles and industrial processes, even the number of people around, because CO is generated by body metabolism. But as a prominent New Jersey pharmacologist said recently, environmental studies suggest that the CO in tobacco smoke has little impact on the content of room air, except under *highly artificial* conditions.

The results of studies conducted under realistic conditions indicated that CO from tobacco smoke in the atmosphere rarely exceeds 10 parts per million (ppm) and is closer to 5 ppm in public places with normal ventilation. Both figures are well below the limit of 50 ppm recommended by various health agencies for workers exposed over an eight-hour period.

7. Are public smoking laws necessary?

There is an all too common tendency today to turn to public authorities to try to correct what might be bothersome behavior in others. But can we ask law enforcement agencies to stretch their already limited resources to police smoking restrictions? Police groups have called such laws "virtually unenforceable" and "a waste of enforcement time."

Few would not agree with the National Black Police Officers Association officials who pointed out that "the limited amount of personnel we do have could better spend their time in making our neighborhoods safe."

Today, when most jurisdictions are strapped for funds and proprietors begrudge every new penny of operating costs—indeed, at *any* time—can we really support laws that create extra expense and inconvenience and cause confrontations?

A law that is only half-heartedly, even unequally, enforced breeds disrespect for all law—and all law enforcement.

Public smoking laws are appropriate to regulate situations in which there is a clear hazard, such as smoking in the presence of gasoline. But they are unnecessary when good judgment, common courtesy and mutual toleration should dictate behavior. Most businesses, for example, will see to the mutual comfort of smoking and nonsmoking patrons as the need exists, for it is in the businesses' best interests.

The majority of smokers can readily determine when smoking is inappropriate, and when approached in a reasonable manner by someone truly bothered by smoke will exercise courtesy.

8. What motivates anti-smoking groups?

Despite health warnings that have appeared on all cigarette packages for many years, a small number of persons remain dedicated to the prohibition of smoking. In the 1950s and 60s, their attack was against a tobacco product—cigarettes. Now it is the users of the product who are the targets as the anti-smokers attempt to subject them to public disapproval and ridicule.

The anti-smokers—a small minority of the non-smokers—lobby for laws to restrict or prohibit the use of tobacco, seeking to convert a custom into a crime.

9. What's the effect of tobacco taxes?

Tobacco, among the most heavily taxed consumer products, provides more than \$6.7 billion annually in direct taxes to federal, state and local government, helping to pay for such things as mass transportation and snow removal. The U.S. Treasury collects 8 cents on every pack of cigarettes sold, individual states from 2 to 21 cents and some 370 municipalities from 1 to 15 cents. Since the first federal tax on tobacco in 1862, more than \$151 billion has been collected by all levels of government.

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