

# Women and Tobacco

## Health Impact

**Death** – Every year, tobacco-related disease kills more than 178,000 women, making it the largest preventable cause of death among women in the U.S. Smoking is responsible for the premature deaths of approximately 3 million women since 1985.<sup>6</sup>

**Lung Cancer** – Lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer death among women, and has been for 15 years.<sup>6</sup> However, 80% of American women mistakenly believe that breast cancer is the primary cause of cancer death among women.<sup>7</sup> Smoking-related lung, trachea, and bronchus cancers kill nearly 45,000 women a year.<sup>6</sup>

**Cardiovascular Disease** – 54,000 women die each year of smoking-related cardiovascular disease. Most heart disease among women younger than 50 is a result of smoking.<sup>6</sup>

**Heart Attack** – Women who smoke are more than twice as likely as other women to have a heart attack. For both men and women, the risk of having a heart attack increases with the number of cigarettes smoked.<sup>8</sup> During 2005, 2,180 Michigan women died from heart attacks caused by tobacco use.<sup>21</sup>

**Breast Cancer** – Women who begin smoking at an early age (within 5 years of their first period) are at higher risk of developing breast cancer.<sup>9</sup> Evidence suggests that breast cancer is more likely to spread to the lungs in women who smoke than in women with breast cancer who do not smoke.<sup>10</sup> During 2004, more Michigan women died of lung cancer than from breast cancer (2,534 vs.1417).<sup>20</sup>

## **Pregnancy**

- Fourteen percent (14%) of women in Michigan smoked while pregnant in 2005.<sup>19</sup>
- An estimated 1,600 smoking-attributable low birth weight babies were born in Michigan during 2005.<sup>19</sup>
- Women who smoke increase their risk for infertility, ectopic pregnancy, spontaneous abortion, and still birth.<sup>12</sup>
- Babies born to women who smoked during pregnancy are more likely to be underweight.<sup>14</sup>

## Smoking Cessation Works

- In 2000, 72.2% of women reported wanting to quit and 41.9% made a quit attempt.<sup>15</sup> Making your home smoke-free keeps everyone healthy.
- Women who have social support for their quitting are 50% more likely to succeed than those who do not.<sup>16</sup>
- Women who quit at age 35 increase their life expectancy by 6 to 7 years. Quitting at age 45 increase life expectancy by 2 to 3 years.<sup>17</sup>
- Women who engage in physical activity are more likely to lose weight after quitting and can increase the successful quit rate among women.<sup>16,18</sup>
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**The Michigan Department of Community Health** offers a free quit smoking coaching hotline at 1-800-480-7848. A quitline representative will determine eligibility. It provides callers with up to seven phone sessions with a personal health coach who will work with the caller from their home or office. Free self help quit smoking kits are also available. Call 1-800-537-5666 to order or go to [www.smokefreeup.org](http://www.smokefreeup.org).

## **Sources**

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