



Tobacco Marketing and Use in the African American Community

- Research from the American Cancer Society and the World Lung Foundation shows that smokers die an average of 15 years earlier than nonsmokers, and that tobacco products are the only consumer products proven to kill one-half of the people who consume it.
- Tobacco companies have targeted African Americans with advertising campaigns in media oriented to these communities and have sponsored.
- Men who smoke are 10 times more likely to die from lung cancer than non-smokers, and the National Cancer Institute reports that African American men are more likely to die from lung cancer than any other racial and ethnic group.
- African Americans who smoke have a two- to four-times greater risk for rheumatoid arthritis than non-smokers, according to the journal *Arthritis & Rheumatism*.
- The American Lung Association reports that while the average American youth is annually exposed to 559 tobacco ads and the average adult female is annually exposed to 617 tobacco ads, the average African American is annually exposed to 892 ads. Much of that advertising money is spent on ads for mentholated cigarettes, which are popular in the African American community. In 1998, money spent on mentholated cigarettes in magazines was 13 percent of total ad expenditures; by 2005, it increased to 49 percent.
- That advertising money seems to be getting results. The American Lung Association reports that while only 24 percent of Caucasian smokers 12 and older and 32 percent of Hispanic smokers 12 and older smoke mentholated cigarettes, nearly 84 percent of African Americans 12 and older smoke mentholated cigarettes.
- The National African American Tobacco Prevention Network states that the tobacco industry offers higher discounts on mentholated cigarettes in African American retail stores and that those retailers receive a higher allocation of “buy one, get one free” and similar promotional offers than other retailers.
- The journal *Public Health Reports* found that in 2007, there were 2.6 times as many tobacco ads per person in neighborhoods with an African American majority as compared to white-majority areas.
- The American Journal of Health Promotion reported that there is a higher density of retailers that sell tobacco products near schools in minority or lower-income neighborhoods.
- The U.S. Center for Disease Control and Prevention report that 21.3 percent of African American adult men smoke, while the national rate of smoking is at only 20.6 percent.
- Smoking-related illnesses are the number one cause of death in the African American community, surpassing AIDS, homicide, diabetes and accidents, according to the American Heart Association.