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## Smoking in Iiyiyiu Aschii

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### Results from a 2003 Survey

Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay  
Institut national de santé publique du Québec

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This report is a summary of a longer paper entitled *Cigarette consumption*

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## Smoking and health

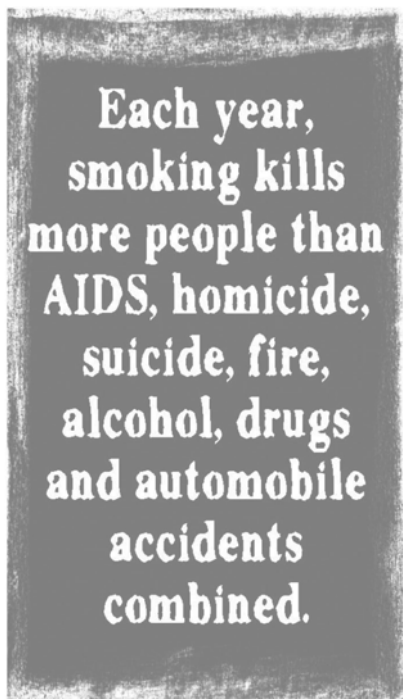
First Nations have always used tobacco for ceremonies and as a medicine. But nowadays, many people have a smoking habit that has nothing to do with traditional use. This habit can cause illness. The more heavily people smoke, and the more years they smoke, the more likely they are to suffer from health problems. This is why we should be especially worried when people start smoking as teenagers.

### Health effects of smoking

*Smoking can cause:*

- ◆ Breathing problems and lung diseases—like asthma, chronic bronchitis, and emphysema
- ◆ Heart disease and strokes
- ◆ Cancers of the lung, mouth, stomach, bladder, and many other organs

*People who have to breathe “second-hand” smoke can also get these diseases. Children are at special risk because of their smaller lungs.*



Youth Coalition  
Against Smoking





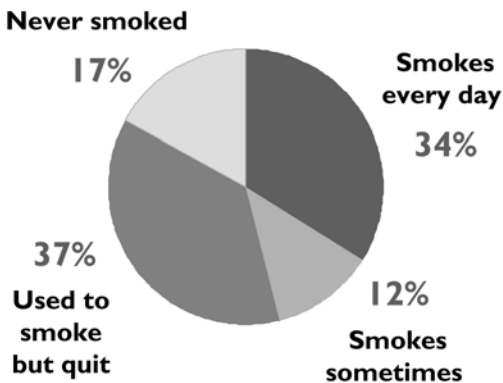


## Smoking habits in Iiyiyiu Aschii

Smoking rates are high in Iiyiyiu Aschii. In 2003, almost half the people in Iiyiyiu Aschii smoked at least sometimes, compared to about a quarter of other Quebecers. Men were more likely than women to smoke.

Figure 1 shows the smoking habits of people in Iiyiyiu Aschii.

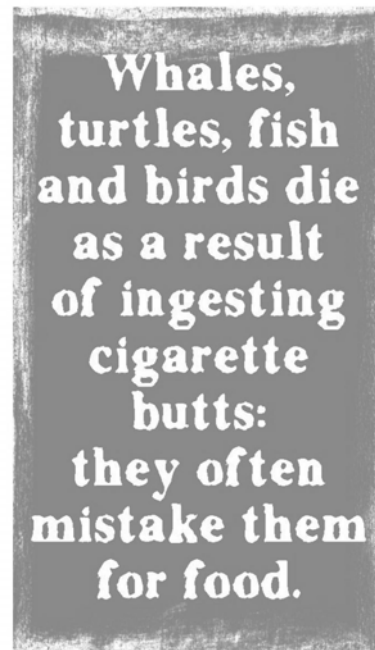
**Fig. 1: Smoking habits in Iiyiyiu Aschii**  
Population age 12 and over in 2003



Smoking rates are especially high in teenagers and young adults. This is troubling. Almost half the teens age 12-19 smoke every day. By age 20-29, more than half smoke every day. These rates are three times higher than those for other young people in Quebec.

There has been some progress since 1991: fewer people smoke every day than in the past. But this progress has taken place mostly in the older age groups. Smoking rates in youth have not decreased much.

Even though more people smoke in Iiyiyiu Aschii, Iiyiyiuch often smoke fewer cigarettes than other smokers in Quebec. Two thirds of all smokers in Iiyiyiu Aschii—especially women—smoke fewer than 10 cigarettes a day. Also, Iiyiyiu Aschii has more people who smoke only now and then, rather than every day. Unfortunately, research in other parts of Canada suggests that many people who start by smoking only now and then turn into daily smokers later on.



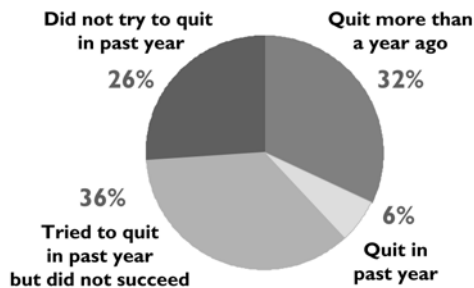
Youth Coalition Against Smoking



## Quitting smoking

How many smokers try to stop? Figure 2 shows the results for people who are (or used to be) daily smokers.

**Fig. 2: Attempts to stop smoking by people who have smoked**  
Population age 12 and over in 2003



These numbers show that more than a third of the people who ever smoked regularly have stopped. Another third tried to quit in the past year, but did not manage it. The numbers in the rest of

Quebec are similar—that is, people in Iiyiyiu Aschii are about as likely as anyone else in the province to try to stop smoking. But in Iiyiyiu Aschii, most of the people trying to stop smoking are over the age of 30. Fewer young adults (20-29) are trying to quit than in the rest of Quebec.

Women are more likely than men to have tried—and managed—to quit. Few people in Iiyiyiu Aschii (11%) used the nicotine patch to help them quit.



## Second-hand smoke

“Second-hand” smoke—smoke that comes from someone else’s cigarette—can cause breathing problems, cancer, and heart disease. In Iiyiyiu Aschii,

- ◆ About one person in ten is exposed to second-hand smoke in their home on most days
- ◆ About two people in ten are exposed to smoke in cars on most days
- ◆ About three people in ten are exposed to smoke in public places on most days.

As compared to the rest of Quebec, people in Iiyiyiu Aschii are more likely to have to breathe second-hand smoke in cars and public places. But they are much less likely to face second-hand smoke at home. The vast majority (85%) of people in Iiyiyiu Aschii say that smoking is not allowed in their home. And youth in Iiyiyiu Aschii are only half as likely those in other parts of Quebec to say that someone smokes in their house.



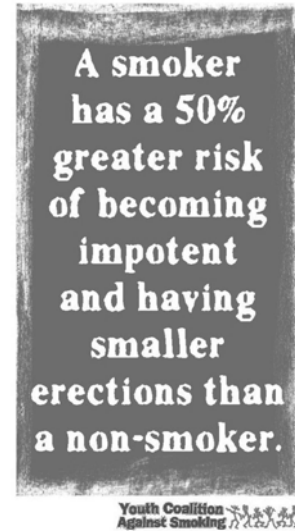


## Discouraging youth smoking

Most smokers take up the habit when they are young. Almost all (91%) of today's smokers began smoking regularly before they were twenty years old. A third of them were already daily smokers by age 15.

Quebec law forbids selling cigarettes to anyone under 18. But it seems that in Iiyiyu Aschii this law is doing little to prevent youth from buying cigarettes:

- ◆ Most of the young smokers in Iiyiyu Aschii buy their cigarettes. Only about one youth in ten obtains cigarettes from other sources like family or friends.
  - ◆ Only a third of young smokers have ever been asked their age when they tried to buy cigarettes (compared to two thirds in the rest of Quebec).
- ◆ Only a third of young smokers have had a store refuse to sell them cigarettes. Even in the younger children (age 12-14), less than half have ever been refused.
  - ◆ A quarter of all youth have asked strangers to buy cigarettes for them.



## Implications for health in Iiyiyu Aschii

Iiyiyu Aschii has much higher smoking rates than the rest of Quebec. Youth smoking is a special concern: rates are triple the average, and children take up the habit very young. Few stores check children's age before selling them cigarettes, and few youth in Iiyiyu Aschii are trying to quit smoking.

People in Iiyiyu Aschii often face second-hand smoke in public places and in cars. But they are much less likely than people in other parts of Quebec to have to breathe second-hand smoke in their own homes.

If the current patterns persist, many health problems in Iiyiyu Aschii could get worse:

- ◆ Youth in Iiyiyu Aschii already run the risk of problems caused by overweight, lack of exercise, and diabetes. Smoking combines with these risks to raise them even further.
- ◆ Breathing problems are more common in Iiyiyu Aschii than elsewhere in Quebec. High smoking rates could make some types of lung problems even more frequent.
- ◆ Rates of heart disease and stroke are going up in Iiyiyu Aschii. Smoking increases people's risk for these problems.
- ◆ Rates of lung cancer—most of which is caused by smoking—could increase, unless people quit smoking.



