

Tobacco and Cancer In West Virginia

Tobacco-Associated Cancers

Quick Facts

- Tobacco use causes about 1 in 5 cancer deaths per year in the United States (US).¹
- West Virginia (WV) currently has the highest prevalence of smokers in the nation. Almost one-fourth of WV adults are smokers (Figure 2).²
- WV has the second highest incidence of tobacco-associated cancers in the nation.²
- Over 45% of all diagnosed cancers in WV are Tobacco-Associated.³
- On average, people who smoke die about 10 years earlier than people who have never smoked.¹
- About 80% of lung cancer diagnoses and lung cancer deaths are due to smoking.¹
- Lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer-related death in WV.³

**For more information, please
contact the West Virginia Cancer
Registry.**

oeeps.wv.gov/cancer

(304) 356-4463

Tobacco and Cancer

Tobacco use is currently the leading cause of preventable cancer and cancer death in the nation, being responsible for twelve different kinds of cancer (Figure 1), serious lung diseases (COPD, emphysema), increased risk of lung infections (pneumonia, tuberculosis), worsen existing lung diseases (asthma), and other serious health problems (coronary heart disease, high blood pressure, heart attacks, strokes).¹

Cigarette smoking is the number one risk factor for lung cancer.¹ Currently, there is only one approved screening method for lung cancer: low-dose computer tomography (or low-dose CT scan). This type of screening involves an x-ray scanning the body with low doses of radiation to make detailed images of the lungs. The United States Preventive Services Task Force recommends this screening test for those that meet the following guidelines:⁴

- Between the ages of **50 and 80 years old**, *and*
- **Smoke now or have quit within the last 15 years**, *and*
- Have a **20-pack year*** or more smoking history

***Pack-year:** the number of packs of cigarettes smoked per day multiplied by the number of years smoked:

2 packs a day x 10 years = 20 pack years

1 pack a day x 20 years = 20 pack years

1/2 pack a day x 40 years = 20 pack years

There are several different forms of tobacco, including smoked items (cigarettes, cigars, bidis), 'smokeless' items (snuff, chewing tobacco), and electronic cigarettes, or 'e-cigarettes'. E-cigarettes have become the most commonly used form of nicotine among youth in the United States, due to easy accessibility, tempting advertisements, various e-liquid flavors, and the belief that they are safer than cigarettes. Despite this, there is no safe form of tobacco.¹ Ultimately, the best way to avoid health risks associated with tobacco use is to quit, or not start at all.

Tobacco and Cancer in West Virginia

Figure 1: Tobacco Associated Cancers¹

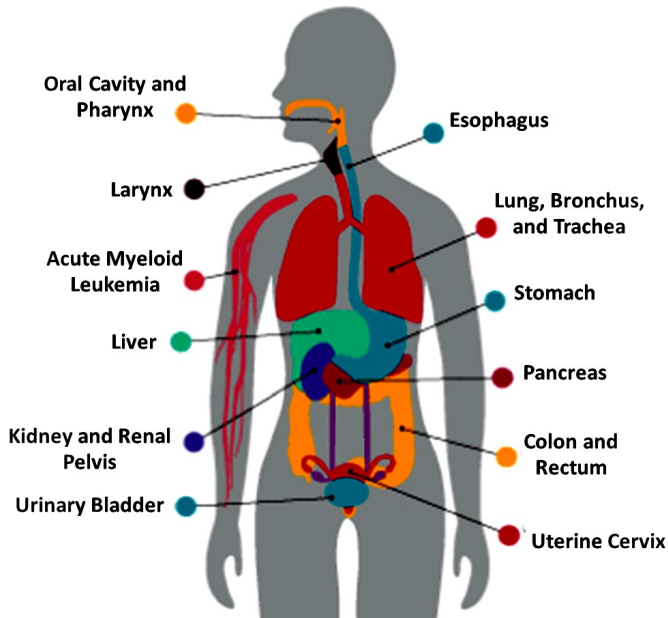


Figure 2: Smoking Prevalence in Adults aged 18+ (percentage, age-adjusted prevalence), BRFSS 2021, All Races and Ethnicities, Male and Female, WV and US²

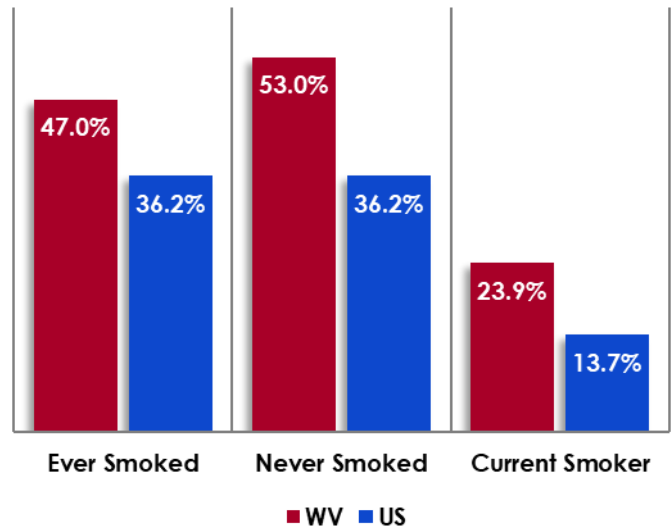
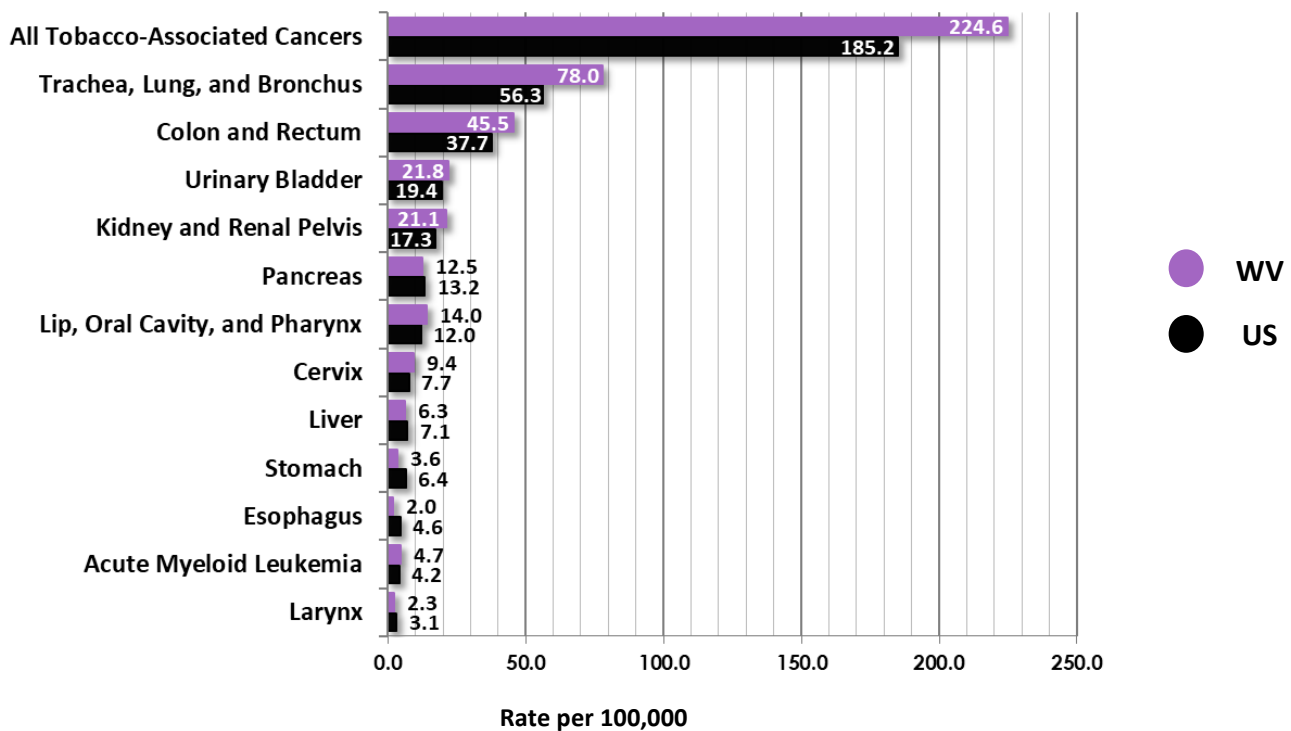


Figure 3: Average Annual Age-Adjusted Incidence Rates (per 100,000) Tobacco-Associated Cancers, Males and Females, West Virginia and United States, 2015-2019²



References:

- 1) American Cancer Society. Health Risks of Smoking tobacco. <https://www.cancer.org/healthy/stay-away-from-tobacco/health-risks-of-tobacco/health-risks-of-smoking-tobacco.html>. Accessed February 2023.
- 2) U.S. Cancer Statistics Working Group. U.S. Cancer Statistics Data Visualizations Tool, based on 2021 submission data (1999-2019); U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and National Cancer Institute; www.cdc.gov/cancer/dataviz, released in June 2022.
- 3) West Virginia Cancer Registry
- 4) U.S. Preventive Services Task Force. Lung Cancer: Screening. <https://www.uspreventiveservicestaskforce.org/uspstf/recommendation/lung-cancer-screening>. Accessed May 2023