

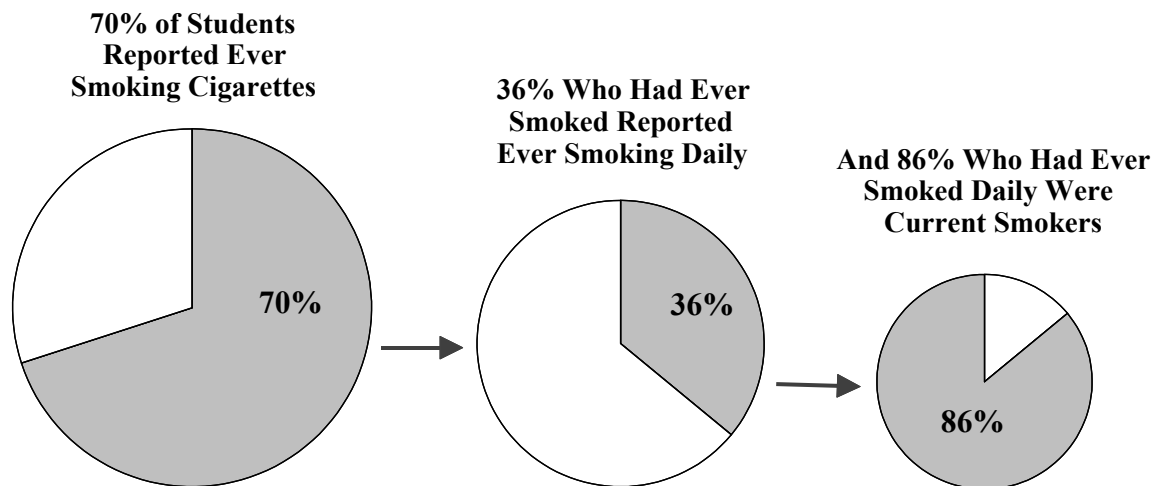
A Weekly FAX from the Center for Substance Abuse Research

University of Maryland, College Park

More Than One-Third of High School Students Who Try Smoking Become Daily Smokers

The Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) is a biennial survey of health risk behaviors among U.S. high school students. According to data from the 1997 survey, 70% of students reported ever smoking cigarettes. More than one-third (36%) of these students became daily smokers, and the majority were current smokers at the time of the survey (see figure below). While the rate of ever smoking did not vary by sex, race/ethnicity, or grade level, daily cigarette smoking was more frequently reported by white students (42%) than by Hispanic (25%) or black students (15%), a pattern consistent with previous studies. The authors note that “once adolescents have established a pattern of regular use, their behavior is usually compelled by nicotine dependence as well as social factors. Efforts are needed to help youth break the cycle of addiction and prevent the disability and death associated with tobacco use” (p. 387). For information about adolescent tobacco use and prevention, visit the CDC’s Tobacco Information and Prevention Source (TIPS) internet site at www.cdc.gov/tobacco.

Percentage of U.S. High School Students Reporting Selected Smoking Behaviors, 1997
(N=16,262)



NOTE: “Ever smoking” was defined as ever smoking cigarettes, even one or two puffs. “Ever smoking daily” was defined as ever smoking at least one cigarette every day for 30 days. “Current smoking” was defined as smoking cigarettes on one or more of the 30 days preceding the survey.

SOURCE: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, “Selected Cigarette Smoking Initiation and Quitting Behaviors Among High School Students,” *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report* 47(19):386-389, May 22, 1998.