Healthy Kentuckians 2010:
Secondhand Smoke Exposure

Healthy Kentuckians 2010 recommends increasing the proportion of localities that adopt ordinances and/or policies to restrict tobacco use, increasing the proportion of schools with tobacco-free environments, and increasing the proportion of worksites that prohibit smoking or limit it to separately ventilated areas. Strong policies that restrict indoor smoking contribute to changing pro-tobacco norms, reducing tobacco consumption, and increasing attempts to quit.[2]

Secondhand Smoke Exposure

Exposure in Past 7 Days

- ✓ Almost two-thirds of middle school nonsmokers and nearly three-fourths of high school nonsmokers report recent exposure to secondhand smoke.
- ✓ Current tobacco users are more likely to be exposed to secondhand smoke than students who have never smoked, consistent with national data.[1]

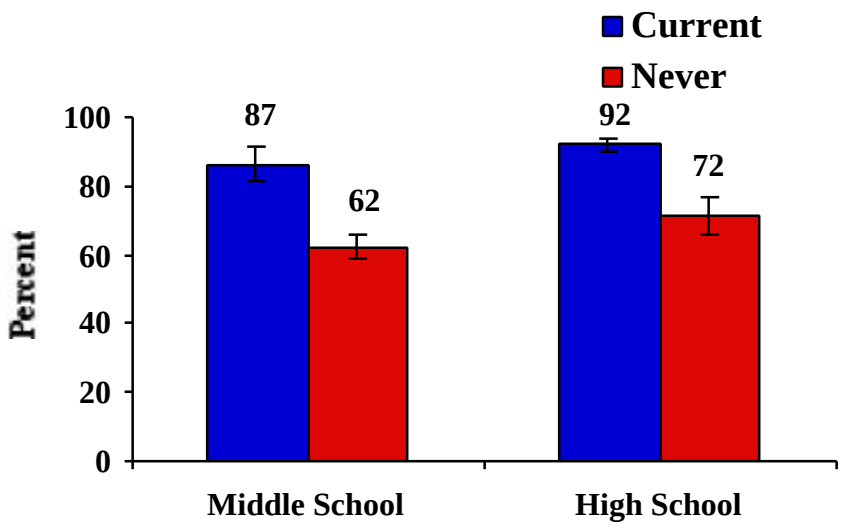

Figure 24. Current tobacco users and never smokers exposure to secondhand smoke during the past 7 days

Background and Significance

Secondhand smoke is a major source of indoor air contamination, and it contains over 50 cancer-causing compounds. Evidence continues to accumulate that secondhand smoke causes heart disease and lung cancer among nonsmokers, accounting for 62,000 heart disease deaths and 3,000 lung cancer deaths annually.[2,15] In addition, exposure to secondhand smoke causes low birth weight, sudden infant death syndrome, middle ear infections, and nasal sinus cancer.[4] The Environmental Protection Agency estimates that secondhand smoke is responsible for up to 26,000 asthma cases in children and up to 300,000 cases of bronchitis and pneumonia in toddlers.[15] Children are especially vulnerable to the harmful effects of secondhand smoke.

Secondhand Smoke Exposure

Exposure in the Home

- ✓ Over one-third of students who have never smoked are exposed to secondhand smoke in the home.
- ✓ Current youth tobacco users are more likely than nonsmokers to live with someone who smokes cigarettes.

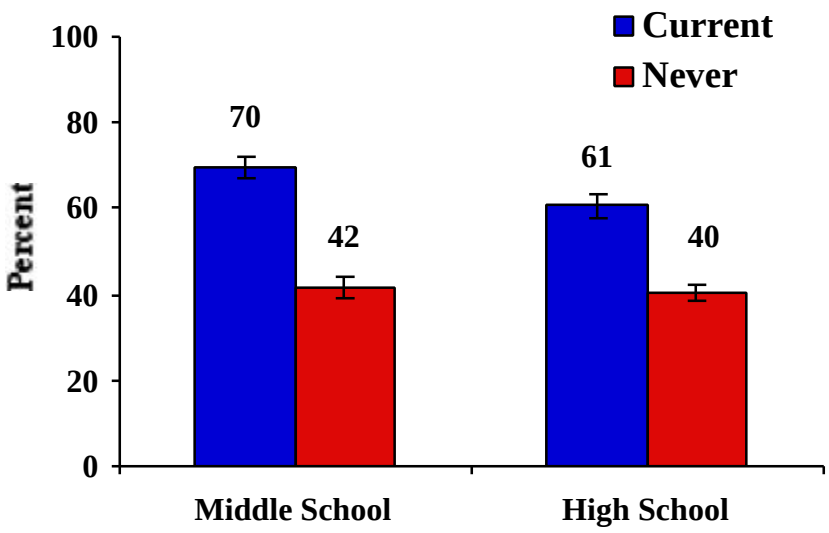

Figure 25. Current tobacco users and never smokers who live with someone who currently smokes cigarettes

Background and Significance

Kentuckians spend a major portion of their time indoors where most exposure to secondhand smoke occurs. For adults, the workplace is the most important location for exposure to secondhand smoke. For infants and children, however, the home is the most significant exposure location. [15]

Secondhand Smoke Exposure

Exposure in Automobiles

- ✓ Four in ten youth who have never smoked report exposure to secondhand smoke in automobiles.
- ✓ Regardless of age, current youth tobacco users are more likely to be exposed to secondhand smoke in automobiles than nonsmokers, consistent with national data.[1]

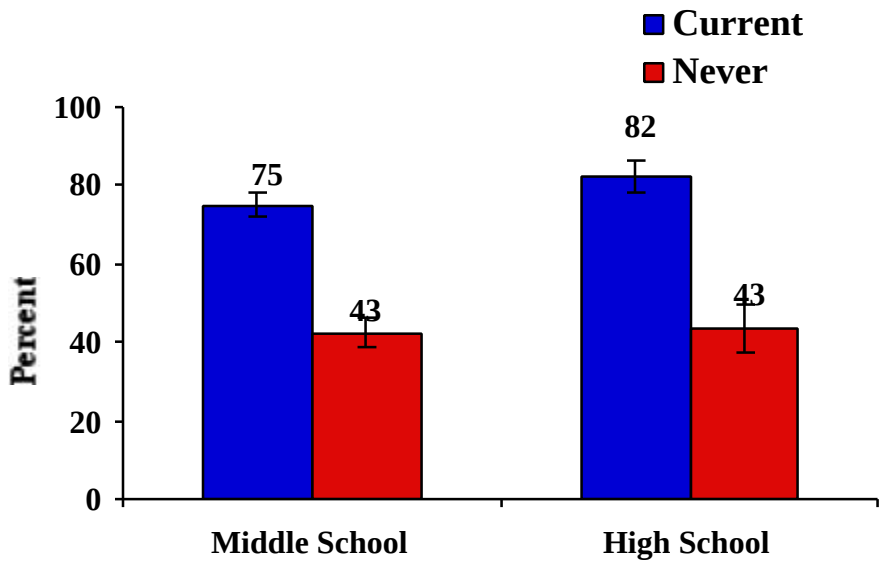

Figure 26. Current tobacco users and never smokers who rode in car with smoker on 1+ days during past 7 days

Background and Significance

Nationally, one in three middle and high school nonsmokers report exposure to secondhand smoke in automobiles; whereas, 82% of middle and high school smokers report automobile exposure.[1] Smokers who live and work in smoke-free environments are more likely to perceive that secondhand smoke is harmful and more likely to quit than smokers who do not live and work in smoke-free places.[2]

Strategies for Eliminating Exposure to Secondhand Smoke Based on CDC Best Practices

Policy Development

- Adopt strong tobacco-free policies in schools, workplaces, and public places to protect children from the hazards of secondhand smoke.
- Encourage communities to enact clean indoor air ordinances requiring 100 percent smoke-free environments in all public places including workplaces and restaurants.
- Encourage the adoption of voluntary home and automobile smoking bans.

Community Mobilization

- Involve community partners in identifying and rewarding smoke-free public places such as restaurants, malls, and other businesses.

Information Dissemination/Media Advocacy

- Conduct public education campaigns to reduce smoking in homes, automobiles, schools, workplaces and public accommodations by targeting parents, guardians, healthcare providers, daycare providers, and community leaders.

Professional Development and Training

- Include information on the hazards of secondhand smoke in all tobacco prevention training workshops.
- Train local tobacco prevention coalition members on effective ways of promoting tobacco-free environments.
- Train health care providers to ask and advise their patients to reduce home and automobile exposure to secondhand smoke.

Surveillance/Evaluation

- Continue to monitor youth exposure to secondhand smoke using the Kentucky Youth Tobacco Survey.
- Monitor adult exposure to secondhand smoke by including secondhand smoke items on the annual Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) telephone survey.
- Continue to monitor secondhand smoke exposure in restaurants using the Kentucky Department for Public Health Food Service Establishment Smoking Policy Data Base.