

Teen smoking has fallen across most of U.S.

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Overall youth smoking is now under 9 percent nationwide, with highest rates in Wyoming, lowest in Utah.

(HealthDay)—A significant decline in cigarette smoking took place among U.S. kids aged 12 to 17 between 2002 and 2010 in 41 states, according to a new federal government report.

Overall, adolescent cigarette use fell from 12.6 percent to 8.7 percent during that time, but large differences remained among states. For example, the rate was highest in Wyoming (13.5 percent) and lowest in Utah (just under 6 percent).

The number of youth who believed that there was great risk of harm from smoking one pack or more per day rose slightly from 63.7 percent to 65.4 percent overall. However, that awareness only increased in five states, the U.S. Substance Abuse and [Mental Health Services Administration](#) (SAMHSA) report said.

Previous research has shown that adolescents are less likely to smoke if they believe there is a [high risk](#) of harm.

"The Surgeon General's report, 'Preventing Tobacco Use Among Youth and [Young Adults](#),' notes that smoking is the nation's leading cause of preventable death," SAMHSA administrator Pamela Hyde said in an agency news release.

"Although this report shows that considerable progress has been made in lowering adolescent cigarette smoking, the sad, unacceptable fact remains that in many states about one in 10 adolescents smoked cigarettes in the past month," Hyde noted. "The report also shows that we must collectively redouble our efforts to better educate adolescents about the risks of tobacco and continue to work with every state and community to promote effective tobacco use prevention and recovery programs."

A federal and state partnership meant to end illegal tobacco sales to minors is one of several collaborative tobacco prevention efforts in which SAMHSA participates. Over 15 years, [tobacco sales](#) to youth fell from about 40 percent to 8.5 percent, the release noted.

[Tobacco use](#) is the leading cause of premature and preventable death in the United States, the authors noted in the news release.

More information: The Nemours Foundation has more about [kids and smoking](#).

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