

Many Americans back nicotine restrictions in cigarettes, survey says

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FDA has power to mandate lower levels of the toxin, researchers say.

(HealthDay)—Nearly half of Americans would support a government-mandated reduction of nicotine levels in cigarettes, according to a new study.

The U.S. [Food and Drug Administration](#) has the authority to lower nicotine levels in cigarettes, but has not yet used this power, according to researchers at the Schroeder Institute for Tobacco Research and Policy Studies at the Legacy Foundation. The new findings show that such a move would have the support of nearly 47 percent of U.S. adults.

About 16 percent opposed such action, while nearly 38 percent had no opinion, according to the analysis of data from a June 2010 survey.

"Nicotine reduction could be a promising tool to protect the population from the harm and death caused by [tobacco products](#)," study lead author Jennifer Pearson, a Schroeder Institute research investigator, said in a foundation news release.

"This study shows us that such measures could be acceptable to a large number of Americans," Pearson added.

Legacy is a nonprofit, anti-smoking organization based in Washington, D.C.

The survey also found that [smokers](#) who are thinking of quitting are more likely to support nicotine reduction than those who are not considering quitting. Blacks, [Hispanics](#) and people with lower levels of education are especially supportive of nicotine reduction, according to the study published online Jan. 17 in the [American Journal of Public Health](#).

"This data could be helpful to FDA in gauging public sentiment and tailoring its messaging if the agency chooses to move forward with such regulation," Pearson said.

Some experts believe that lowering [nicotine](#) levels in cigarettes could make it easier for people to quit smoking and could help reduce the number of young people who start smoking.

About 46 million Americans smoke. Each year, more than 400,000 people in the United States die from tobacco-related diseases.

More information: The American Cancer Society offers a [guide to quitting smoking](#).

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