

# PHYSICAL HEALTH & WELL-BEING

## INDICATOR #12 Frequency of Tobacco Use

### DEFINITIONS

The original established indicator is the percentage of youth age 15 to 19 who report smoking occasionally or every day. In the interest of more fully understanding the level of tobacco use among youth, this indicator will be explored here and in future reports as two measures, specified below as Indicators 12A and 12B.

**INDICATOR #12A** — Percentage of BC students in grades 7–12 who report having ever tried smoking tobacco.

**INDICATOR #12B** — Percentage of BC students in grades 7–12 who report using tobacco daily, during the past 30 days.

### KEY MESSAGES

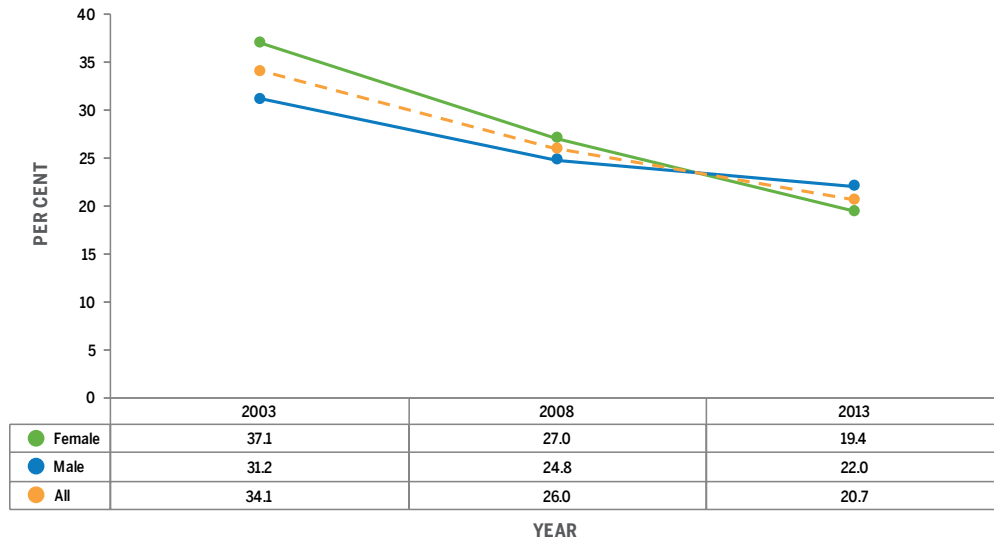
- ▶ There are many adverse short- and long-term health effects of tobacco use among children and youth. Evidence has found that children and youth who smoke are less physically fit, experience more respiratory illnesses, and their lung function declines faster than their non-smoking peers.<sup>1</sup> Mental health problems, difficulties at school, crime, and early parenthood have also been associated with tobacco use at a young age.<sup>2,3</sup>
- ▶ Youth tobacco use is also important because of the high likelihood that those who initiate smoking in adolescence will become dependent and continue smoking into adulthood. The adverse health effects of tobacco smoking in adults are well-established and include a range of cancers, cardiovascular diseases, and respiratory conditions.<sup>2,4,5</sup>
- ▶ Tobacco smoking is the leading cause of preventable death in BC. In fact, over 6,000 deaths in the province each year are attributed to tobacco smoking, killing more people than all other drugs, motor vehicle crashes, murder, suicide, and HIV/AIDS combined.<sup>6</sup>
- ▶ Health care costs for treatment of tobacco-related illness are estimated to be \$2.3 billion each year.<sup>7</sup>
- ▶ The BC government has implemented and advanced a series of policies and programs that provide a degree of protection from second-hand smoke and disincentives for smokers by reducing opportunities to smoke.<sup>8</sup>

*“My friends just think smoking is highly unattractive. Generally smoking is considered nasty and gross.”*

► Figure 12A.1 shows that the percentage of youth who report ever having tried smoking tobacco decreased from 2003 to 2013. Figure 12B.1 reveals that the percentage who report smoking daily also decreased over these 10 years.

► Figure 12B.2 shows geographic differences by health authority. They illustrate that in 2013, the percentage of youth who reported smoking tobacco every day during the past 30 days was much higher in Interior and Northern Health than in Fraser and Vancouver Coastal Health Authorities.

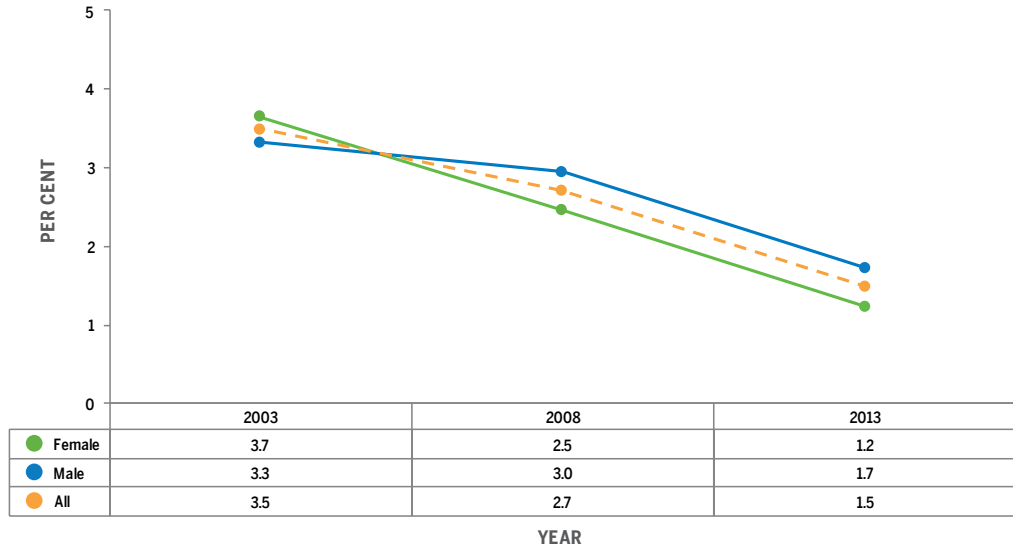
**FIG 12A.1** Percentage of Students in Grades 7-12 Who Reported Ever Trying Smoking Tobacco, by Sex, BC, 2003, 2008, and 2013



**Notes:** "Ever trying smoking" means youth who reported ever smoking a cigarette, cigar, or cigarillo, including a few puffs, in their lifetime. It does not include the use of ceremonial tobacco. The differences between years were statistically significant for all groups. The difference between sexes was statistically significant for all years. See Appendix B for more information about this data source.

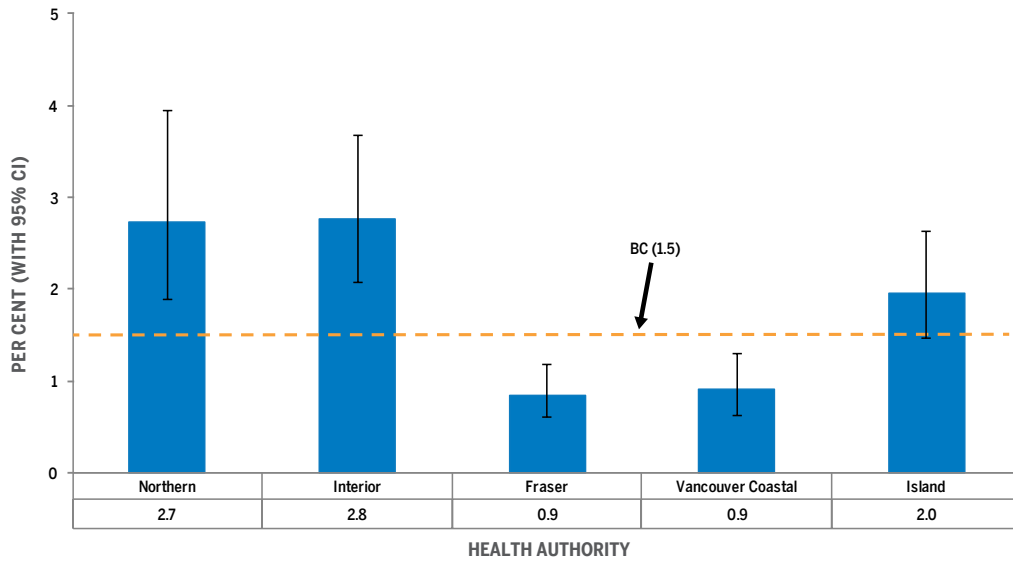
**Source:** McCreary Centre Society, BC Adolescent Health Survey, 2003, 2008, 2013. Prepared by the Surveillance and Epidemiology Team, BC Office of the Provincial Health Officer, 2016.

**FIG 12B.1** Percentage of Students in Grades 7-12 Who Reported Using Tobacco Daily, by Sex, BC, 2003, 2008, and 2013



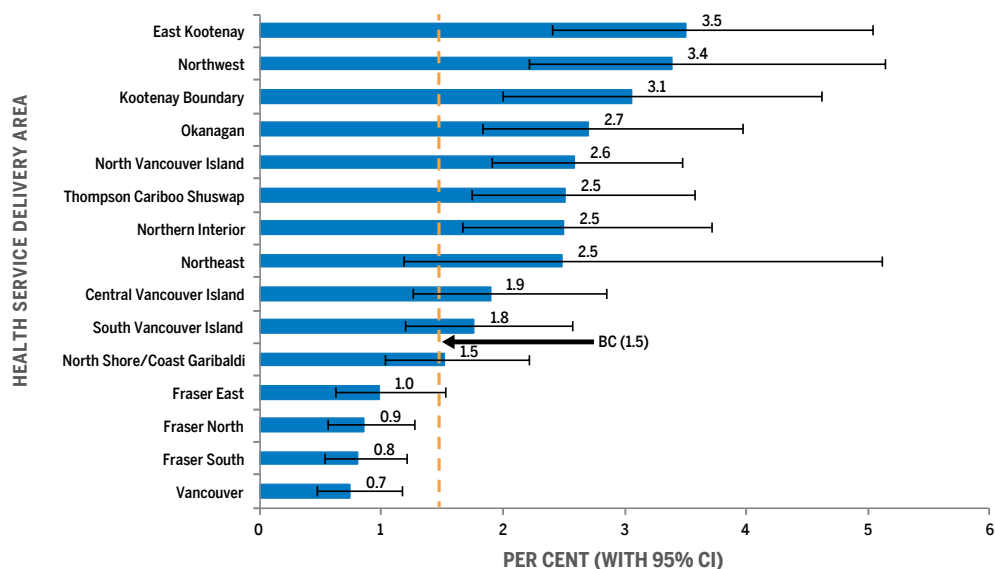
**Notes:** "Using tobacco daily" means the youth reported smoking tobacco every day during the past 30 days. It does not include the use of ceremonial tobacco. The differences between 2003 and 2013 and between 2008 and 2013 were statistically significant for all groups. The difference between 2003 and 2008 was statistically significant for females only. See Appendix B for more information about this data source.  
**Source:** McCreary Centre Society, BC Adolescent Health Survey, 2003, 2008, 2013. Prepared by the Surveillance and Epidemiology Team, BC Office of the Provincial Health Officer, 2016.

**FIG 12B.2** Percentage of Students in Grades 7-12 Who Reported Using Tobacco Daily, by Health Authority, BC, 2013



**Notes:** "Using tobacco daily" means the youth reported smoking tobacco every day during the past 30 days. It does not include the use of ceremonial tobacco. Health authority is based on the location of the school. See Appendix B for more information about this data source.  
**Source:** McCreary Centre Society, BC Adolescent Health Survey, 2013. Prepared by the Surveillance and Epidemiology Team, BC Office of the Provincial Health Officer, 2016

**FIG 12B.3** Percentage of Students in Grades 7-12 Who Reported Using Tobacco Daily, by Health Service Delivery Area, BC, 2013



**Notes:** "Using tobacco daily" means the youth reported smoking tobacco every day during the past 30 days. It does not include the use of ceremonial tobacco. Health service delivery area is based on the location of the school. The data for Richmond have been suppressed due to small numbers in order to preserve confidentiality. See Appendix B for more information about this data source.

**Source:** McCreary Centre Society, BC Adolescent Health Survey, 2013. Prepared by the Surveillance and Epidemiology Team, BC Office of the Provincial Health Officer, 2016.

## REFERENCES

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