



2025 | CAPITOL INFORMATION & EDUCATION DAYS



Building Stronger Communities for Healthier Women & Girls in California

The Tobacco Industry increasingly targets women and young girls with new products and strategies, including initiatives like Altria's Women's Leadership Summit, which focuses on Gen Z's strengths to lure them in. The influence of these marketing tactics continues to play a significant role in the initiation of tobacco use among women and young girls.¹



How women are affected by tobacco:

- Approximately 200,000 women die each year in the U.S. as a result of smoking-related diseases.²
- Smoking has a multi-generational impact. Smoking during pregnancy and a father's smoking during adolescence both increase the risk of asthma in children.³
- Women face a higher risk and worse outcomes from smoking-related pulmonary disease, while smoking rates decline more slowly among them.⁴
- Lung cancer has been the leading cause of cancer death among women since surpassing breast cancer in 1987.⁵
- US adults with low socioeconomic status generally have high prevalence of cigarette smoking.⁶
- The smoking rate among adults with a GED (44.1%) was more than five times the rate for those with a college degree (8.3%) and almost twice the rate of adults whose highest level of education was a high school diploma (23.6%).⁷

- Women who smoke have a 25% greater risk of developing coronary heart disease compared with men who smoke.⁸
- LGBT and transgender populations face higher tobacco use rates, leading to increased risks for negative health outcomes. E-cigarette use among transgender female adults is three times higher than that of cisgender adults, while cigar use is four times higher than that of cisgender females.⁹

Targeting girls and women for nearly a century:

- Tobacco companies continue to produce brands specifically for women. Marketing toward women is dominated by themes of social desirability, empowerment, and independence, which are conveyed by advertisements featuring slim, attractive, and athletic models.¹⁰
- After the Virginia Slims brand was introduced, the smoking rate among 12-year-old girls increased by 110%.¹¹
- The same exploitative marketing techniques used by tobacco companies to portray cigarettes as sexy and empowering are now being used to market e-cigarettes to women.¹²

How Smart Tobacco Policies Can Improve Women's Lives:

- Strong local retail licenses can give communities the resources they need to enforce minimum age to purchase and ensure young women don't get addicted to deadly tobacco products.
- Smokefree multi-unit housing policies can protect expectant mothers and their families from experiencing harmful secondhand smoke in their homes.
- Policies that increase access to tobacco cessation programs can help reduce tobacco use among all women, including those of childbearing age.



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