



2026 | CAPITOL INFORMATION & EDUCATION DAYS



Truth, Healing, and Health: Protecting Women

Women carry much of the responsibility for family health, and they make up a significant portion of the public health workforce and advocacy efforts. Despite this, the tobacco and nicotine industry continues to target women and girls with highly potent products. These companies rely on the same exploitative marketing strategies once used to frame cigarettes as symbols of confidence and empowerment. Today, those tactics are repackaged as messages about wellness, harm reduction, or even enhanced performance. The result is deeper addiction and a shifting of health risks onto women, families, and infants.



- The nicotine crisis is also a mental health issue, as high-potency, faster-absorbing e-cigarettes and nicotine pouches, marketed as “harm reduction” products, increase stress and contribute to rising prevalence and intensity of nicotine addiction despite declining combustible cigarette smoking rates (an 8 mg pouch delivers about 50% of its nicotine within one hour. At a similar rate, super pouches could deliver more nicotine in one hour than a pack-per-day smoker inhales in 24 hours.^(1,2,3,4,5,13,14)
- Nicotine exposure is associated with low birth weight, risk for sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS), and disrupts brain and lung development in fetuses.^(6,7,8)
- Smoking has a multi-generational impact. Smoking during pregnancy and a father’s smoking during adolescence both increase the risk of asthma in children.⁽¹²⁾
- Women face higher risk and worse outcomes from smoking-related disease, while smoking rates decline more slowly among them. Lung cancer has been

the leading cause of cancer death among women since 1987, and over 200,000 women die annually in the U.S. from smoking-related diseases.^(11,15,16)

- U.S. adults with low socioeconomic status generally have high prevalence of cigarette smoking and tobacco product use among adults with a GED (42.8%) was significantly higher—more than three times the rate among those with a bachelor’s degree (11.9%) and nearly twice that of adults with only a high school diploma (24.9%).
- Women who smoke have a 25% greater risk of developing coronary heart disease compared with men who smoke.⁽¹⁹⁾
- LGBTQ+ populations face higher tobacco use rates leading to increased risks for negative health outcomes. E-cigarette and cigar use is three and four times higher among adult transgender individuals compared to their cisgender peers.⁽²⁰⁾

➤ The same exploitative marketing techniques used by tobacco companies to portray cigarettes as sexy and empowering and increased smoking rates among 12-year-old girls increased by 110%.⁽²⁴⁾, are now being used to market e-cigarettes⁽¹⁰⁾ and nicotine pouches to young girls and women.

➤ What is truly needed is better access to cessation resources (combination of behavioral therapy, group support and NRT's if appropriate when not pregnant or nursing).^(21,22,23)

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