

“ Having the quit coaches to talk to has made a world of difference in making me feel that I can be successful in quitting for good. ”

— Alaska’s Tobacco Quit Line Caller



Tobacco Facts for Alaska Natives

Alaska Native Cultures and Tobacco Use:

In many cultures, tobacco has become culturally and socially accepted, and is sometimes used as a rite of passage. For many Alaska Natives, tobacco use is tied to traditional activities, such as hunting, berry picking and fishing. However, tobacco was first introduced to Alaska Native people by western traders and does not serve a ceremonial, religious or medicinal function in Alaska Native culture.

Use of Iqmik:

- Iqmik is a form of homemade smokeless tobacco used among Alaska Natives, primarily in the Southwest Region of Alaska
- Iqmik is a dangerous combination of tobacco and punk ash. When chewed, Iqmik raises the pH in the mouth to make the nicotine act quicker and become more potent
- Although Iqmik may seem natural, it is not a safer product to use than commercial tobacco

How tobacco affects your health:

- Alaska Natives have higher rates of cancer and diabetes compared to other racial groups
- 90% of all lung cancers among Alaska Natives are caused by smoking
- Using tobacco while pregnant increases the risk for having birth complications
- Exposure to secondhand smoke puts babies at a higher risk for Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)
- Exposure to secondhand smoke increases nonsmokers' risk of lung cancer, respiratory problems and heart disease



Tips to help you quit

Why should I quit?

- 69% of Alaska Native adult smokers WANT to quit
- 93% of Alaska Native adults agree that every cigarette causes a smoker damage
- Your risk for heart disease is cut in half one year after quitting tobacco
- Your risk for cancer of the mouth, throat and esophagus is cut in half five years after quitting
- Your risk for lung cancer drops by as much as half 10 years after quitting

How do I quit?

- Use Alaska's Tobacco Quit Line! The Quit Line is a **FREE** service for all Alaskans and is available at 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669), seven days a week, from 4 a.m. to 11 p.m. Alaska Tobacco Quit Line services include a series of phone counseling sessions and up to eight weeks of free Nicotine Replacement Therapy (the patch, gum or lozenge).
- Have a friend or family member support you. A designated person to give you encouragement while you quit tobacco will help your chances of being successful. Ask Alaska's Tobacco Quit Line to send you the "Ally Guide!"
- Contact your regional clinic to find out if tobacco cessation resources are available in your area.
- Go "Cold Turkey."
- Keep quitting! Most tobacco users make multiple quit attempts before they quit tobacco for good. If you relapse, quit again!

“ I wasn't sure what to expect when I made that first call – I've never done anything like this, but I was open-minded and willing to give them a chance. I liked the way they helped me out, especially with finding other alternatives to smoking. ”

– Alaska's Tobacco Quit Line Caller



For more information, visit us at alaskaquitline.com

