

Smoking by the numbers

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Every day I hear the stories of people who want to quit smoking and help people who they love quit smoking. They want to feel better, live longer, protect their children, and save money – reasons we can all relate to, whether we are smokers or non-smokers.

Here are a few facts that not only support this reasoning, but hopefully compel us to quit or convince others to quit.

- In one year, a pack-a-day smoker in Minnesota spends \$1,814.05 on cigarettes. For about the same amount, a smoker could instead enjoy:
 - o a weeklong vacation for two to Miami Beach (AAA 2008 survey),
 - o a four-day family vacation for four to Walt Disney World (Fodor's Travel News, Kim Wright Wiley, January 31, 2008), or
 - o all new stainless steel kitchen appliances.
- Every pack of cigarettes sold creates \$8.80 in health care costs.
- Ninety percent of all adult smokers begin smoking as teenagers.
- Twenty percent of all high school students are smokers.
- Approximately 400,000 Americans die annually because of their own smoking habits.
- Approximately 50,000 Americans die annually because of their exposure to secondhand smoke.
- Smoking kills more people each year than alcohol use, illegal drug use, AIDS, car accidents, murders, and suicides combined.
- More than half of Minnesota's smokers are trying to quit (Minnesota Adult Tobacco Survey, 2007).

Statistics like these are proof that stopping smoking ourselves – or supporting others in quitting – is well worth the effort in terms of the lives and money saved.

Please note: All statistics are from the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, unless otherwise noted.