

3 Female smoking

"Women who smoke like men die like men who smoke."
Joseph Califano, US Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare, 1977-79

About 250 million women in the world are daily smokers: 22 percent of women in developed countries, and 9 percent of women in developing countries. In some parts of South Asia, prevalence of oral tobacco use is estimated to be as high as 30 percent in females, compared with 25 percent in males.

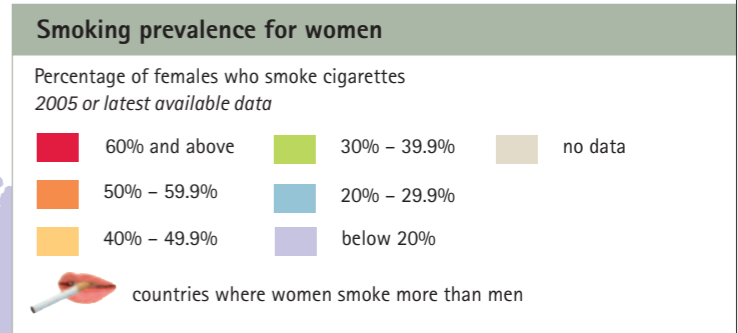
Cigarette smoking among women is declining in many developed countries, notably Australia, Canada, the UK and USA, but this trend is not found in all developed countries. In several southern, central and eastern European countries cigarette smoking is either still increasing among women or has not shown any decline.

The tobacco industry promotes cigarettes to women using seductive but false images of vitality, slimness, emancipation, sophistication and sexual allure. In reality, smoking causes reproductive damage, disease and death. Tobacco companies produce a range of brands marketed to women, most notably "women-only" brands: these feminized cigarettes are long, extra-slim, low-tar, light-coloured, or mentholated.

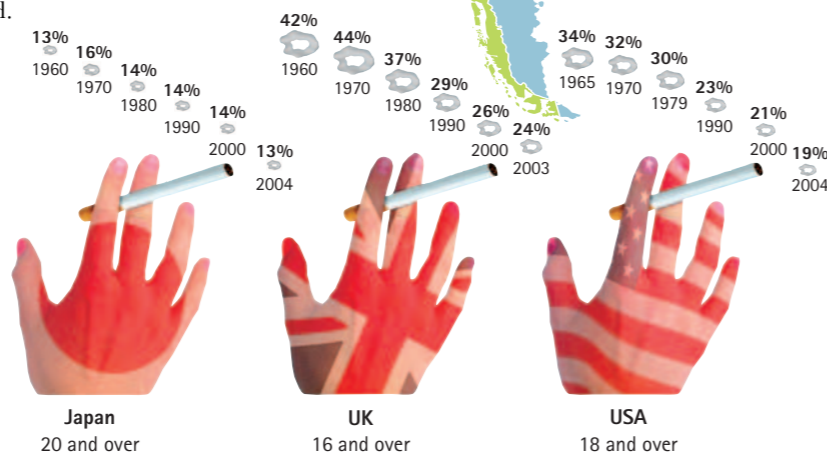
If women start smoking like men, it will be an unmitigated global public health disaster. Preventing an increase in smoking among women in developing countries would have a greater impact than any other health measure.



"The growing importance of the female smoker is due to several factors including fewer females quitting, more females beginning to smoke, and increasing their daily cigarette volume."
Lorillard Tobacco Company, 1998



Smoking trends
Percentage of adult female smokers
1960-2004
selected countries



Heavy smokers
Top 10 countries with highest reported smoking rates among women
2005 or latest available data

