



Smoking and Diabetes in Indian Country

The Great Plains American Indian population has some of the highest rates of commercial tobacco use and secondhand exposure in the nation. American Indians and Alaska Native adults are also 2.3 times more likely to be diagnosed with diabetes compared to non-Hispanic whites.

HOW COMMERCIAL TOBACCO USE CONTRIBUTES TO TYPE 2 DIABETES

Smoking commercial tobacco increases inflammation in the body, which occurs when cigarette smoke injures cells, causing them to swell. Swelling of the cells interferes with cell function. Smoking commercial tobacco also causes oxidative stress, which damages cells in the body. Evidence shows that smoking commercial tobacco is associated with a higher risk of obesity. Obesity is a known risk factor for diabetes because it encourages the production of cortisol, a hormone that increases blood sugar. Smokers tend to have higher levels of cortisol than nonsmokers.

EFFECTS OF COMMERCIAL TOBACCO USE IN PEOPLE WITH DIABETES

Insulin is less effective when people with type 2 diabetes are exposed to nicotine. Diabetics who smoke need more insulin to control their blood sugar. Smokers who have diabetes are more likely to have serious health problems including heart and kidney disease and poor blood flow in the legs and feet that can lead to infections and possible amputation.

TRADITIONAL TOBACCO VS. COMMERCIAL TOBACCO

Traditional tobacco is smoked in a pipe for ceremonial purposes. It is often used as an offering to a healer, elder, or other person as a sign of respect or thanks. Commercial tobacco is deliberately targeted at specific consumer groups. Commercial tobacco companies consciously add chemicals into their tobacco that lead to addiction. Commercial tobacco scarcely contains traditional tobacco. Commercial tobacco is often chain smoked, while traditional tobacco is not.

RESOURCES FOR QUITTING

Visit www.smokefree.gov OR www.keepitsacred.org

Smokers have a
30% to 40%
higher risk of
diabetes than
nonsmokers.

GREAT PLAINS GOOD HEALTH AND WELLNESS PROGRAM

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