

What a WV Smoker Spends on Cigarettes in a Lifetime

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The West Virginia Health Statistics Center (HSC) and the WV Division of Tobacco Prevention have collaborated on this document to estimate the cost of cigarettes for the average West Virginia adult smoker over a 30 year period. We will use this document to educate youth and adults about the direct costs of smoking cigarettes---persuading youth to continue their tobacco-free commitment and helping smoking adults to quit. Reducing tobacco use in WV will prevent thousands of premature deaths and save billions of dollars each year.*

Several documents were used in calculating these projections, including the *Tax Burden on Tobacco*, which provides historical information for each state and the U. S. on the cost of cigarettes, excise taxes, and consumption of cigarettes. The HSC was conservative in its methodology for these projections.

Looking Back: 1980 through 2009

Cigarette Smoking Prevalence

The prevalence of smoking among WV adults is estimated to have been about 30% in 1980, and there were about 399,000 adult cigarette smokers. In 2009 the prevalence of smoking was 25.6%, estimated from the WV Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS), and has remained in the range of 25% to 28% for many years, compared to the U. S. prevalence of 17.9% (2009 U. S. BRFSS). In 2009, there were about 366,000 adult smokers age 18 and older in WV.

Cigarette Consumption

The *Tax Burden on Tobacco* (Vol 45: FY2010) indicates that 210,100,000 packs of cigarettes were sold in WV in 2009. By looking at packs of cigarettes sold in WV and the estimated number of adult smokers, cigarette consumption is estimated at 573 packs per year per smoker in 2009, or about 1.5 packs per day per smoker, making WV cigarette consumption one of the highest in the U. S.

The Price of Cigarettes

The price of a pack of cigarettes was \$0.64 in 1980 and \$3.70 in 2009. By multiplying the packs smoked per year by the cost per pack of cigarettes, the cost per smoker in 1980 was about \$364, and in 2009 it was about \$2,121 per year.

Costs Over 30 Years

Looking back on a lifetime of cigarette smoking, the average WV adult smoker would have spent about \$31,000 on cigarettes. If that money had *not* been spent on cigarettes, but were invested** (and compounded annually) at 6%, that pot of money would have been worth about \$64,000 today. Invested** at 8% interest, it would have been worth over \$85,000.

Looking Forward: 2010 through 2039

Cigarette Smoking Prevalence

The prevalence of smoking among WV adults was 25.6% in 2009 (WV BRFSS). Holding constant all factors that influence smoking behaviors in WV, the cigarette smoking prevalence is projected to be about 23% in 2039. The number of adults still smoking in 2039 is projected to be about 330,000.

Cigarette Consumption

The projection for cigarette packs sold in WV in 2039 is about 180,900,000 packs.

The Price of Cigarettes

The price of a pack of cigarettes is conservatively projected to be about \$14.82 in 2039. While this may seem high, it is not unreasonable: currently the price of a pack of cigarettes in New York State is \$8.97 (Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, Aug 2010). The bulk of any price increase would be from production, distribution, sales and inflation. In the year 2039, the average smoker could spend over \$7,200 per year on cigarettes.

Forecasted Savings Over 30 Years

Forecasting into the future, the average WV adult smoker may be spending over \$122,000 on cigarettes over a 30 year time period. If that money is *not* spent on cigarettes, but is invested** (and compounded annually) at 6%, it may be worth over \$267,000 in 2039. Invested** at 8% interest, it may be worth about \$362,000 in 2039.

Reasons for Smokers to Quit: By quitting you will.....

- Save a lot of money (well over thousands of dollars).
- Live a longer, healthier life. The average WV smoker who dies prematurely loses 14 years of life.
- Save your family the misery of watching you suffer from cancer, lung disease, and heart disease.
- Have better chances for employment. Many employers now restrict hiring of smokers due to increased healthcare costs and time away from work.
- Have better chances for love. The majority of single people are nonsmokers and the majority of nonsmokers prefer to date nonsmokers.
- Stop exposing family members and friends to cigarette smoke, and prevent illness and disease when your home is smoke-free.
- Eliminate your influence on young people around you to take up tobacco.
- Feel and look younger. You will age less quickly and everything about you will smell better (clothes, hair, breath, home).
- Save yourself the misery of smoke-breaks in the rain and snow, and late-night cigarette runs to feed your addiction.
- Have the tremendous satisfaction of knowing that you quit and perhaps influenced others to quit, too.



Call the WV Quitline for free help in quitting tobacco:

**Tobacco Is Killing (and Costing) Us, 2002-2006*, and *Tobacco Is Killing (and Costing) Us, Update 2008*, WV Health Statistics Center.

<http://www.wvdhhr.org/bph/hsc/statserv/publist.asp>

**Investment calculations were obtained from www.moneychimp.com/calculator/compound_interest_calculator.htm



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