

Menthol Facts - West Virginia



[Menthol cigarettes](#) are a significant risk to public health and to advancing health equity.

Menthol in cigarettes makes it more likely that youth and young adults will try smoking. It increases the chances that young people who start smoking will continue to smoke on a regular basis. Menthol can also make it harder to quit smoking.

The tobacco industry aggressively markets menthol cigarettes to certain population groups. These efforts contribute to targeted groups being more likely to smoke menthol cigarettes. For example, non-Hispanic Black or African American people who smoke cigarettes are more likely to smoke menthol cigarettes than people of other races or ethnicities who smoke cigarettes.

In the United States, fewer people smoke cigarettes now than in recent decades. But the proportion of people who smoke and use menthol cigarettes has increased, particularly among population groups with [disproportionately higher rates of commercial tobacco use](#), secondhand smoke exposure, and related health problems.

How Does West Virginia Compare to the Nation?

Estimates Based on 2018-2019 Data

Estimates Based on 2018-2019 Data

Adults who currently smoke

Non-Hispanic Black adults who currently smoke

Hispanic adults who currently smoke

Adults who currently smoke and usually use menthol cigarettes

Non-Hispanic Black adults who currently smoke and usually use menthol cigarettes

Hispanic adults who currently smoke and usually use menthol cigarettes

Adults who currently smoke and are seriously considering quitting within the next 6 months

**Asterisks indicate the data are less precise, but still may be informative.*

Prohibiting The Sale of Menthol Cigarettes Will Save Lives

5,800

If menthol cigarettes were no longer available, an estimated **5,800** additional adults in West Virginia who smoke would quit smoking.

As of February 2024, **zero localities in West Virginia prohibit** the sale of menthol cigarettes and other flavored tobacco products.

Menthol can make it harder to quit smoking. Call **1-800-QUIT-NOW** (784-8669) or text **QUITNOW** to **333888** to get help quitting smoking today.

Comprehensive Medicaid coverage of cessation treatment includes coverage of [individual and group counseling and all seven FDA-approved medications](#) for all Medicaid enrollees.

As of December 2023, **West Virginia does not have** comprehensive Medicaid coverage of cessation treatments.

As of December 2023, **7** types of quit smoking medications are available through Medicaid in West Virginia.

In addition to any West Virginia funds used for tobacco cessation treatment, CDC gave West Virginia **\$145,390** for the quitline in 2023.



The Economic Cost of Cigarette Smoking

Cigarette smoking cost the United States more than \$600 billion in 2018.

These costs included:

- More than \$240 billion in health care spending.
- Nearly \$185 billion in lost productivity from smoking-related illnesses and health conditions.
- Nearly \$180 billion in lost productivity from smoking-related premature death.
- \$7 billion in lost productivity from premature death from exposure to secondhand smoke.

In 2018, **cigarette smoking cost West Virginia \$753 million** in lost productivity from smoking-related illnesses and health conditions.



Who Uses Menthol Cigarettes?

Tobacco companies add menthol to commercial tobacco products to make them seem less harsh and more appealing to young people and to people who have never used tobacco products.

Menthol also enhances the effects of nicotine, which is the addictive drug in cigarettes and other tobacco products. Menthol can make tobacco products even more addictive. In recent years, tobacco companies have increased the amount of nicotine in some menthol cigarettes.

Data can be collected in a way that allows for identification of disparities in tobacco product use and for tracking progress in reducing disparities. More studies are needed to better understand the patterns of menthol cigarette use among people of different population groups experiencing disparities in tobacco use, and among people who may belong to more than one group. However, [data show that](#):

More than 4 in 10 US middle and high school students who smoked cigarettes reported using menthol cigarettes in 2023.

More than 5 in 10 US young adults aged 18 to 25 who smoked cigarettes reported using menthol cigarettes in 2019.

About 4 in 10 US adults over age 25 who smoked cigarettes reported using menthol cigarettes in 2019.

- **Non-Hispanic Black or African American people** who smoke cigarettes are more likely to smoke menthol cigarettes than people of other races or ethnicities who smoke cigarettes.
- A greater proportion of **Hispanic adults** who smoke use menthol cigarettes compared to non-Hispanic White adults.
- A greater proportion of **Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, and Asian adults** who smoke use menthol cigarettes compared to White adults. **Filipino, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander adults** who smoke are more likely to use menthol cigarettes than other groups of Asian adults.
- **Women** who smoke are more likely to use menthol cigarettes than men who smoke.
- **People who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender (LGBT)** who smoke are more likely to smoke menthol cigarettes than people who smoke and do not identify as LGBT.
- **People with lower incomes** are more likely to smoke menthol cigarettes than people with higher incomes.
- **People who smoke and have mental health conditions** are more likely to use menthol cigarettes than those who do not have mental health conditions.