

W I S C O N S I N T O B A C C O
QuitLine
The Military and Tobacco
Fact Sheet

Tobacco Use Among Military Personnel and Veterans

Soldiers in the Iraqi and Afghanistan Wars smoke at rates of 57 percent if they are deployed and 44 percent if they are non-deployed. (*American Journal of Preventive Medicine, December 2008*) Smoking rates among the general public are 19 percent.

More than 12 percent of veterans report using chew tobacco. (*Military Medicine, May 2008*) Chew tobacco use among the general public is 3 percent.

Recently deployed soldiers who try to quit are at greater risk of relapse. For example, among soldiers who served in the Iraqi and Afghanistan Wars and tried to quit, about 40 percent relapse to smoking compared to about 29 percent among those who were not deployed to the Middle East. (*American Journal of Preventive Medicine, December 2008*)

Health Consequences

Smoking among servicemen starting in World War II led to a five-fold increase in lung cancer deaths by 1960 and nine times by 1980.

There is evidence that smoking is associated with double the risk of soldiers experiencing post-traumatic stress disorder. (*Archives of General Psychiatry, November 2005*)

Smoking causes coronary heart disease, including heart attacks.

Smoking causes sudden cardiac death: smokers have two to four times the risk of nonsmokers.

Smoking is an important cause of stroke.

Smoking causes chronic bronchitis and emphysema.

Operation Quit Tobacco (1-800-QUIT-NOW) provides coaching and eight weeks of stop-smoking medication. Call the toll-free number or check out http://www.ctri.wisc.edu/Home/Quit_Line/OQT/oqt.html

May 2009

Sponsored by the Wisconsin Department of Health Services and Center for Tobacco Research and Intervention, UW School of Medicine and Public Health