

Female Smoking

"...the current lower level of tobacco use among women in the world...does not reflect health awareness, but rather social traditions and women's low economic resources." Dr. Gro Harlem Brundtland, Director General, WHO, 1998

About 250 million women in the world are daily smokers. About 22 percent of women in developed countries and 9 percent of women in developing countries smoke tobacco. In addition, many women in south Asia chew tobacco.

Cigarette smoking among women is declining in many developed countries, notably Australia, Canada, the UK and the 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, modernity, emancipation, sophistication, and sexual allure. In reality, it causes disease and death. Tobacco companies have now produced a range of brands aimed at women. Most notable are the "women-only" brands: these "feminised" cigarettes are long, extra-slim, low-tar, light-coloured or menthol.

"Smoking behaviour of women differs from that of men... more highly motivated to smoke... they find it harder to stop smoking... women are more neurotic than men... there may be a case for launching a female oriented cigarette with relatively high deliveries of nicotine..."

1976 research report,
British American Tobacco

