



## COALITION QUÉBÉCOISE POUR LE CONTRÔLE DU TABAC

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# FACT SHEET

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## Harm

- **Tobacco is the leading cause of preventable deaths in Quebec and worldwide<sup>1</sup>.** In Quebec, tobacco kills 10,400 people each year<sup>2</sup>. Globally, tobacco is responsible of 1 in 5 deaths<sup>3</sup> and it is estimated that tobacco kills more than twice as many people as suicides, drownings, car accidents, drugs, murders, AIDS and alcohol combined<sup>4</sup>.
- **Nicotine addiction is as powerful as heroin addiction<sup>5</sup>.** Most smokers regret having started<sup>6</sup> and want to quit but fail to do so<sup>7</sup>.
- **Tobacco kills up to half of its users<sup>8</sup>.** A recent study even estimated that this proportion may actually be closer to two-thirds<sup>9</sup>.
- **A smoker sees his life expectancy drop by on average 15 years<sup>10</sup>.**
- **Smoking is the greatest risk factor for the three first causes of death in Canada:** cancer, cardiovascular disease and respiratory disease<sup>11</sup>.

## Rate

- **The smoking rate in Quebec for 2014 is 19.6%, a statistically significant decrease from both the 2013 (21.4%) and 2014 (22.4%) rates<sup>12</sup>.** This new and recent downward trend follows three tax increases (at the provincial and federal levels) and is occurring after a globally unchanged rate between 2006 and 2012 (24.4 % and 23.8 % respectively)<sup>13</sup>, during which the tobacco industry was able to replace every customer who died or quit with a brand new smoker.
- **In Quebec, 20 % of students in Secondary 3 to 5 have used a tobacco product in the last 30 days** (cigarettes, cigarillos, smokeless tobacco, etc.). 12 % have smoked cigarettes<sup>14</sup>.

## Quebec youth

- **The average age of smoking initiation among high school students is 13.3 years<sup>15</sup>.**
- **Each year more than 12,000 secondary school students start to smoke (cigarettes only)<sup>16</sup>, a mean of 235 new smokers per week.** (The vast majority of young people use legal products — not contraband<sup>17</sup>.)
- **In total, about 50 000 Quebec students have recently used tobacco products (cigarettes or cigars, in the last month<sup>18</sup>.)**
- **In Canada, flavoured tobacco products are most popular amongst the youth of Quebec.** Indeed, 59 % of smokers in Secondary 3 to 5 consumed a flavoured product, compared to 50 % for Canada and 46 % in Ontario<sup>19</sup>.
- **Among students in Secondary 3 to 5 who have smoked cigarettes in the last month, a third (31%) consumed menthol cigarettes<sup>20</sup>; among young regular smokers, it's nearly half (47%)<sup>21</sup>.** In all high school students, "the proportion of students who have consumed a menthol cigarette is 26% among cigarette smokers.<sup>22"</sup>

- More than 91,000 youths (12-19) are exposed to secondhand smoke in a car roughly on a daily basis<sup>23</sup>.

## Costs and profits

- Smoking is responsible for one third (32.6 %) of full-day hospitalization costs in Quebec<sup>24</sup>.
- The tobacco industry is profiting to the tune of at least 6 million \$ a year from youth smoking. Retailers are making 5.7 million \$ in profits off kids. In Quebec, figures are respectively of 2.5 M\$ and 1.7 M\$<sup>25</sup>. (Year in and year out, at least 15%<sup>26</sup> - and even 20%<sup>27</sup> - of Quebec retailers are selling tobacco to minors.)
- **British American Tobacco** (parent company of Imperial Tobacco, which corners 51% of the Canadian market<sup>28</sup>) **made 8.5 billion \$ in profits in 2014**. Philip Morris International (parent company of Rothmans, Benson & Hedges) made 9.5 billion \$ and Japan Tobacco International (parent company of JTI-Macdonald) made 5.4 billion \$, for a **total of 23.4 billion \$** for the 3 major cigarette companies in Canada<sup>29</sup>.

## Legislation

- Since December 2012, all tobacco products sold in Australia must be sold in plain and standardized packaging, without any branding. Australian health authorities attribute to the implementation of the law on plain packaging an unprecedented decline between 2010 and 2013 in daily smoking rates among people aged 14 and over (from 15.1 % to 12.8 % – a trend that has been maintained in 2014<sup>30</sup>), an increase in age of smoking initiation (from 15.4 to 15.9 years) and a fall in the average number of cigarettes consumed per week (111 to 96)<sup>31</sup>. Ireland<sup>32</sup>, the United Kingdom<sup>33</sup> and France<sup>34</sup> have adopted the same measure, and other countries have announced their intention to follow suit soon, including New Zealand, Norway, South Africa and the United Arab Emirates<sup>35,36</sup>.
- Nova Scotia recently passed and has already implemented a full ban on tobacco flavoring, including menthol<sup>37</sup>. Ontario<sup>38</sup> and New Brunswick<sup>39</sup> passed a similar law. Alberta has prohibited most flavoured products from June 1<sup>st</sup> 2015, and those with menthol will be prohibited as of September 30<sup>th</sup> 2015<sup>40</sup>. Like Quebec, Prince Edward Island has tabled a bill<sup>41</sup> to that effect.
- Quebec is the only remaining province that does not ban smoking in cars with kids<sup>42</sup>.
- A range of anti-smuggling measures implemented in recent years has reduced the illicit tobacco market in Quebec from more than a third of the market in 2008-09 to 14% since 2011, despite multiples tax hikes<sup>43</sup>.

## Contemporary tobacco products





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