

Hello! Thank you for your participation in the PATH Study. We greatly appreciate you helping us with this important project. Researchers study the information collected from all participants to better understand the use and health effects of tobacco products. Your continued participation is key to the success of the study.

What Researchers Learn From the PATH Study

Thanks to you and all participants, researchers have a lot of PATH Study data they can analyze to better understand tobacco use. Below are a few recent examples of what they've gleaned from that information.

Why We Ask Questions and Get Samples

As you know as a participant, the study asks lots of questions but also takes samples, such as urine, to analyze. Recent studies shed light on the different information that comes from these two approaches.



How we measure tobacco dependence

Knowing how dependent people are on tobacco products helps us predict their likelihood of quitting. A recent study compared two ways that researchers measure this dependence:

- **Self-reports:** People's descriptions of how dependent they feel on tobacco products.
- **Biological measures:** How much nicotine people are exposed to, based on their urine samples. (It's the nicotine in tobacco products that makes them addictive.)

Both measures predict how likely people who smoke cigarettes are to quit. But for people who use other tobacco products, biological measures are more useful than self-reports in predicting their likelihood to quit using these products. These other products include e-cigarettes, cigars, hookah, and smokeless tobacco. This work shows both self-reports and biological measures of dependence provide valuable yet different information.

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Life in the Field

The interviewers who visit homes to collect health information have a fun, fascinating job. The following stories show just how memorable visits can be! (We slightly changed the stories to protect the privacy of our respondents.)

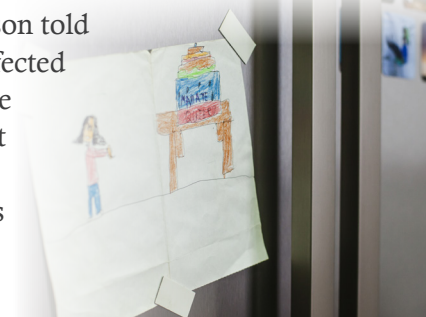
What's That Sound?

I was interviewing a woman who lived in a farmhouse when I heard a gentle sort of humming noise. It continued every few minutes. When we finished the interview, I got the courage to ask "What is that sound?" The respondent smiled and led me to her living room. Resting on the floor were two young alpacas! The woman talked to her animals, who gazed at us calmly. It was a magical moment. I thanked my host for taking part in the study and for introducing me to her adorable pals. All in a day's work!



Interviewing You Is an Honor

I've been with the PATH Study for many years. For me, it's an honor interviewing adults and young participants who want to help people in this country be healthy. They invite me into their homes and take the time to carefully answer my questions. Often, we get to chatting a bit. I've been shown family photos and the art on their refrigerators! Over the years, I have watched so many young people grow, graduate school, and become wonderful adults. One young person told me the PATH study affected their choice of a college major! That's the secret about this project—it helps the participants and our nation!





How's your heart health?

Researchers want to better understand how tobacco use affects heart health. But they can't always do detailed medical tests of study participants. Another analysis of PATH Study data found that participants' description of their heart health is pretty accurate. Researchers asked, for example, what's your blood pressure, cholesterol, and family history of premature heart disease? How do you feel walking up a flight of stairs? It's good to know these self-reports are reliable!

How Tobacco Advertising Affects Teens



Recent PATH Study findings are giving researchers a better understanding of how online tobacco advertising influences teens' behavior. Researchers know that teens are very responsive to online advertising. But the new studies show that how teens interact with those ads can help

predict whether they'll start using or increase their use of tobacco and e-cigarette products. The PATH Study's rich trove of data helps researchers understand subtle differences that they may have missed otherwise.

Research Shows the Importance of Your Participation

You answer a lot of questions for the PATH Study. The responses from you and your fellow participants give researchers a lot of important data to study. Here is just a small sample of some of the varied topics of papers published recently using that data:

- ✓ E-cigarettes and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)
- ✓ Menthol cigarette use and smoking cessation
- ✓ Smoking cessation among people who use cigarettes and e-cigarettes
- ✓ Oral health and tobacco use
- ✓ Cigarillo use among young adults
- ✓ E-cigarettes and smoking cessation
- ✓ Young people's use of e-cigarettes
- ✓ Cigar warning labels
- ✓ Changes in the use of flavored tobacco products

Get to Know Your Body's Relaxation Response

When stress hits, your body reacts. Your heart rate and blood pressure increase, maybe you sweat more. When you're calm, your heart rate and blood pressure decrease. You feel better! Here are three ways that research shows we can help our body relax:

1. **Meditation** involves letting your mind focus on just one specific word or set of words, an object, or your breathing.
2. **Progressive muscle relaxation** is just tensing and then relaxing one muscle group at a time, each for a few seconds.
3. **Deep breathing** is just what it sounds like—taking in a slow, deep breath, letting your stomach or chest expand, and then exhaling slowly. You can do it anytime, anywhere.



Teens: Tips for Turning Off Stress

If you're feeling stressed out, you're not alone. Here are four tips that psychologists have found particularly useful for young people:



Sleep well. Turn off your screens and aim for 8-10 hours of sleep a night.



Move more. Play a fun sport or go for runs or fast walks with a friend or family member.



Try some healthy relaxation activities. Sit in a quiet place, close your eyes, and focus on your breathing for a few minutes. Curl up with a good book. Go for a stroll in nature.



Talk it out with a trusted adult. Talking helps you put problems in perspective and find solutions.



Questions?

If you need any help related to the PATH Study, go to PATHStudyInfo.nih.gov or call 1-888-311-1819 toll-free. On smartphones, you can scan the QR code to get to the website.



Thank you for being a part of the PATH Study. Your participation is invaluable!