

# Tobacco and Alcohol

## Smoking

### Decrease in Number of Regular Smokers

The National Statistics Office's latest survey shows that there was a continual decrease in the number of regular cigarette smokers, from 9.53 million smokers in 2006 to 9.49 millions in 2007. This means the ratio of regular smokers over the age of 15, both male and female, decreased from 18.94% in 2006 to 18.54 % in 2007.

### The Well-to-do and the Poor

It was found that the number of both poor and rich smokers decreased, with the poor having a tendency to smoke more than the rich.



### The Age of Regular Smokers

The 41-59-year old smokers had the highest cigarette consumption, followed by the 25-40-year old smokers. However, these age groups showed a continual drop in cigarette consumption, with the exception of the 2006-2007 period, during which the number of smokers increased slightly among young people of 15-24 years old. This shows that these young people are new smokers who are at risk and require careful monitoring.

While cigarette smoking tended to decrease, the government's revenue collected from excise tax on cigarettes in 2550 went up from 34,642 MB in the year 2549 to 41,823 million baht in 2550. The rise in government revenue was due to an adjustment of the cigarette excise tax on retail sales in August 2550, with the fall in the number of cigarette smokers.

## Cigarettes

### More People Quit Smoking at Home

The rate of people smoking cigarettes at home decreased from 86% in 2000 to 59% in 2006 as a result of ThaiHealth's campaign, Homes without Cigarettes.

### Fewer Thai Smokers Lighting Up

The number of cigarettes smoked decreased from 11 cigarettes per day in 2000 to 10 cigarettes daily in 2006.

## Alcohol Consumption

### Alcohol Business Targets Youth as ?New Alcohol Consumers?

The results of the survey carried out by the National Statistics Office indicated that in 2550 there were 14.9

million alcohol drinkers, or 29.3% of the population of 15-year olds and above. This was a decrease from 16.2 million people, 32.7%, in 2547, with the percentage of male drinkers being much higher, 51%, than female drinkers, only 8.8%.

Among all the alcohol consumers, 3.8% drank alcohol everyday. 31% of the regular drinkers lived outside of municipalities, while 25.4 % of these habitual alcohol consumers lived in municipalities.

Nevertheless, the rate of these regular alcohol drinkers went up from 17.8 % in 2004 to 20.2% in 2007, while the ratio of non-frequent drinkers went down from 14.9% in 2004 to 9.7% in 2007. The problem is alcohol consumption has been gaining popularity among teenagers. The survey by the Child Watch Project of the Institute of RUMCHITTI, found that students from secondary school onwards were addicted to alcohol, cigarette smoking and heroin.

In the past few years more alcoholic drinks have been produced with youngsters as the target, such as punch that is made from blending alcohol with fruit juice or syrup to enhance aroma and taste. This has become the first gateway to becoming a "drinker." These drinks are sold in places where teenagers meet, such as shopping areas and outside of universities in Bangkok and in the provinces, not to mention delivery services.

## **Campaign for "No Alcohol during Buddhist Lent" and development of a "National Day of No Alcoholic Drinks at Temples"**

- 2001
  - 12% of Thai people stopped drinking alcohol during Buddhist Lent.
  - ThaiHealth and its partners started their campaign for no drinking during Buddhist Lent and sent a letter requesting the Thai government to make Buddhist Lent an annual "National Day of No Alcoholic Drinks at Temples".
- 2006
  - The percentage of Thai people abstaining from alcohol during Lent increased from 40% in 1996 to 63%.
  - ThaiHealth and partners continued their campaign for "No Drinking during Buddhist Lent".
- 2008
  - The percentage of Thai people abstaining from drinking alcohol during Lent increased to 65%.
  - The government declared the beginning of Buddhist Lent a National day of No Alcoholic Drinks.

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