

SURVEY OF 8–13 YEAR OLDS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Populus interviewed 1009 children in England aged 8–13 online between 24th and 28th August 2009 on behalf of the Department of Health. Participants were selected at random from an online panel of young people or targeted via parents who were panel members. Populus is a member of the British Polling Council and abides by its rules.

For more information go to www.populus.co.uk.

SUMMARY

- 32% of 8 to 13 year olds thought that smoking was the main cause of death among under-65s, and 58% placed it among the top 3. Participants in London were the least likely to believe that smoking was the most common cause of death among under-65s, with only 18% saying this, while 21% of these respondents selected ‘road accidents’ as the most common cause of death among under-65s.
- 1-in-10 (10%) of 8 to 13 year olds had tried a cigarette, with children living in London (14%), boys (11%) and older participants (22% of 13 year olds) most likely to have smoked.
- Of those who hadn’t tried a cigarette, 9% thought that they would try smoking at some point in the future.
- Most children (54%) felt that celebrities smoking on TV, in films and in magazines had no impact on their likelihood of trying smoking, with as many saying it made them less likely to try smoking as said that it made them more likely to give it a try (16% for each).
- 1-in-20 children (5%) believed that older people who smoke look cool, with boys more likely to think this than girls (7% to 4%).
- Three quarters (75%) of respondents said that they mind people smoking around them. This figure remains relatively stable across gender, age and region categories.
- Almost 9-out-of-10 participants (87%) think that people smoking around them was damaging to their health, with the proportion saying this increasing slowly with age. 92% believed that people smoking in cars was damaging to the health of other passengers.
- Three quarters of 8 to 13 year olds (76%) thought that people smoking around them increased their likelihood of catching cancer.

- The main perceived benefit to being brought up in a smoke-free environment was the improved health of a family (84%), followed by the more pleasant living environment (71%) and the improved family finances (69%).
- 27% of participants, including a third (32%) of 8 year olds, believed that it was possible that everybody would have stopped smoking by 2030.
- 4-out-of-10 children indicated that at least one of their parents smoked, with children in the North East most likely to say this (52%). Children who had tried smoking were more likely to have parents who smoked than those who hadn't (56% to 38%).
- Of those whose parents smoked, 51% indicated that they did so in the home, with children in the North East once again more likely to say this (70%).
- A third (35%) of children whose parents smoked indicated that their mother or father did so in the car while they were a passenger, with 73% of these participants saying that they didn't like this and wished that they wouldn't. 76% of children were also worried that their mum or dad smoking in the car was damaging to their own health.
- Almost all of those whose parents smoked (96%) wished that they didn't, with a majority of children saying that they would rather their parents gave up smoking than...
 - a) ...take them on holiday (62%)
 - b) ...spend more time with them (69%)
 - c) ...give them more pocket money (64%)

OVERVIEW

What do you think is the main cause of death among people who are younger than 65 in the UK? (Please rank in order with 1 being the most common and 7 the least common)

	% SAYING 'MOST COMMON'	% TOP 3
Smoking	32%	58%
Road accidents	18%	48%
Illegal drugs misuse	12%	47%
Murder / manslaughter	10%	30%
Alcohol misuse	8%	45%
Accidents at work	5%	22%
AIDS	5%	19%

Have you ever tried a cigarette?

Yes	10%
No	90%

Do you think you ever will try a cigarette? [ALL SAYING THEY HADN'T TRIED A CIGARETTE, N = 912]

Yes	9%
No	91%

Do you think pictures of celebrities smoking in magazines and smoking in films and TV make you more or less likely to give it a try?

More likely	16%
Less likely	16%
No difference	54%
I don't know	14%

Do you think that older people who smoke look cool?

Yes	5%
No	95%

Do you mind people smoking around you?

Yes	75%
No	18%
I don't know	7%

Do you think people smoking around you damages your health?

Yes	87%
No	4%
I don't know	8%

In what ways do you think people smoking around you damages your health? (Please tick all that apply)

Increased risk of lung cancer	76%
Increased risk of chest infections	56%
Increased risk of asthma	53%
Increased risk of other infections	25%
Increased risk of diabetes	10%
None of the above	1%
I don't know	13%

Do you think parents smoking around children in the car is damaging to their child / children's health?

Yes	92%
No	3%
I don't know	4%

What do you think are the benefits of being brought up in a smoke-free environment? (Please tick all that apply)

Better health for the whole family – less likely to get ill	84%
More pleasant living environment	71%
More money to spend on family activities	69%
Fewer arguments about smoking	31%
None – there are no benefits	1%
I don't know	3%

Lots of people are now giving up smoking. Do you think that smoking could be extinct by 2030?

Yes	27%
No	42%
I don't know	32%

Does your mum or dad smoke?

Yes	40%
No	60%

Does your mum or dad smoke in the home? [ALL SAYING THEIR MOTHER OR FATHER SMOKES, N = 403]

Yes	51%
No	49%

Does your mum and dad smoke in the car while you are a passenger? [ALL SAYING THEIR MOTHER OR FATHER SMOKES, N = 403]

Yes	35%
No	65%

How do you feel about your parents smoking in the car while you are a passenger? [ALL SAYING THEIR MOTHER OR FATHER SMOKES IN THE CAR, N = 140]

I don't like it and wish they wouldn't	73%
I like them smoking in the car	4%
I don't mind them smoking in the car	24%

Are you worried that your mum or dad smoking in the car will damage your health? [ALL SAYING THEIR MOTHER OR FATHER SMOKES IN THE CAR, N = 140]

Yes	76%
No	24%

Do you wish your parents didn't smoke? [ALL SAYING THEIR MOTHER OR FATHER SMOKES, N = 403]

Yes	96%
No	4%

For each of the following, please say which you would prefer... [ALL SAYING THEIR MOTHER OR FATHER SMOKES, N = 403]

Your parents to stop smoking	62%
OR your parents to take you on holiday	38%
Your parents to stop smoking	69%
OR your parents to spend more time with you	31%
Your parents to stop smoking	64%
OR your parents to give you more pocket money	36%