

Republic of Korea



How many people die from smoking in South Korea each year?  
**36,706**

What is the annual cost-of-illness attributable to smoking in South Korea each year?  
**30,190,225,522,578**  
won

Current Rates of Smoking and Tobacco Use in South Korea

Tobacco use continues to be an epidemic in South Korea. Government complacency in the face of the tobacco epidemic protects the tobacco industry in South Korea as the death toll grows each year. Proponents of healthier societies must push for the implementation of evidence-based best practices in tobacco control to create change and reduce the negative effects of tobacco use.

Adult Smoking Prevalence in South Korea  
15+ years old; 2025

Men	Women
25.00%	4.20%

Adult smoking prevalence in South Korea is 14.60%.

Number of Adult Smokers in South Korea  
15+ years old; 2022

Men	Women
7,392,000	1,233,000

Number of adult smokers in South Korea is 8,626,000.

Youth Smoking Prevalence in South Korea  
10-14 years old; 2023

Boys	Girls
8.7%	4.99%

Youth smoking prevalence in South Korea is 6.89%.

Adult Smokeless Tobacco Use in South Korea  
15+ years old; smokeless tobacco includes snus, chewing tobacco, gutkha, etc.; 2023

Both Men and Women
NA

Adult smokeless tobacco use prevalence in South Korea is NA.

### Deaths Caused by Tobacco in South Korea

% deaths attributable to tobacco use in 2023

Men

**16.31%**

Women

**3.81%**

10.39% of all deaths in South Korea are caused by tobacco use.

Learn more about global **Prevalence**,  
**Youth Smoking** and **Deaths**.

### Negative Effect of Tobacco Use in South Korea

Tobacco use harms both the public and fiscal health of South Korea, threatening efforts to improve equity, alleviate poverty, and protect the environment.



#### Societal Harms

The annual cost-of-illness attributable to smoking in South Korea is 30,190,225,522,578 won. This includes direct costs related to healthcare expenditures and indirect costs related to lost productivity caused by illness and premature death.



#### Harms Development

Tobacco spending diverts funds from the resources that families need to rise out of poverty. On average in South Korea, a smoker must spend 0.92% of GDP per capita to buy 100 packs of the most popular cigarettes in a year.



#### Environmental Harms

Cigarette butts are the most commonly discarded pieces of waste worldwide. It is estimated that 11,868 tons of butts wind up as toxic trash in South Korea each year, equal to 4,395 female African elephants.



#### Harms Health Equity

The tobacco industry markets its products aggressively to lower-income populations and youth in South Korea.



#### Harms NCDs

Not only is smoking a major risk factor for the 4 largest noncommunicable diseases (cancer, heart diseases, respiratory diseases, and diabetes), but people living with mental illness are nearly 2x as likely to smoke as other individuals.

Learn more about **Health Effects**.

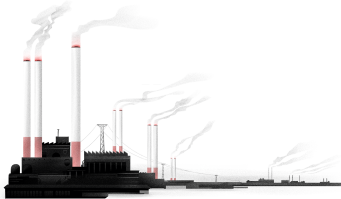
Impact of the Tobacco Supply Chain on South Korea

The tobacco industry profits significantly from producing and selling tobacco. At the same time, across the tobacco supply chain, there are significant negative health and economic repercussions for South Korea.



Tobacco Industry

The total revenue of the 6 largest tobacco companies in the world was USD 364 billion in 2023, about the same as Pakistan’s Gross National Income (GNI), 5x Panama’s GNI and 9x Paraguay’s GNI.



Tobacco Production

There were approximately 107,640,000,000 cigarettes produced in South Korea in 2024.



Tobacco Growing

There were 28,010 tons of tobacco produced in South Korea in 2023 on 11,639 hectares of quality agricultural land that could have been used to grow food.

Learn more about global **Growing** and **Product Sales**.

Ending the Tobacco Epidemic in South Korea

Fortunately, there are evidence-based i.e. proven-solutions to the challenges posed by tobacco use. For several decades, governments around the world have been introducing a set of policies that address the demand for tobacco products, particularly among youth. These policies effectively reduce consumption and are cost-effective because they save governments enormous amounts of money in health care spending and increase economic productivity.

Current Tobacco Control Policies in South Korea

Designated Smoke-Free Areas in South Korea

Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	NA	NA
Healthcare Facilities	Educational Facilities	Universities	Government Facilities	Indoor Offices	Restaurants	Pubs and Bars	Public Transport	All Other Indoor Public Places	Funds for Enforcement

Availability of Cessation Services in South Korea

Quitting Resources

National quit line, and both NRT (Nicotine replacement therapy) and some cessation services cost-covered

National Quit Line

Yes

Learn more about best practices in Cessation.

Tobacco Packaging Regulations in South Korea

Quality of Tobacco Packaging Regulation

None

Text warning label only

✓Text warning label with graphic warning label

Plain Packaging with text/graphic warning label

% of Pack Covered

50%

Learn more about best practices in Counter Marketing.

Tobacco Control Mass Media Campaigns in South Korea

Ran a National Anti-Tobacco Campaign	Yes
Part Of A Comprehensive Tobacco Control Program	Yes
Pre-Tested With The Target Audience	Yes
Target Audience Research Was Conducted	Yes
Aired On Television And/Or Radio	Yes
Utilized Media Planning	Yes
Earned Media/Public Relations Were Used To Promote The Campaign	Yes
Process Evaluation Was Used To Assess Implementation	Yes
Outcome Evaluation Was Used To Assess Effectiveness	Yes

Learn more about best practices in Mass Media.



Tobacco Tax Policies in South Korea

Using evidence-based international recommendations/best practices, the Economics for Health Cigarette Tax Scorecard assesses four components of tax systems - price, change in affordability, tax share, and structure - on a scale of 0 to 5, where a higher score is preferred.

Overall Score	Cigarette Price	Change in Affordability Over Time	Tax Share of Price	Tax Structure
Insufficient data	Insufficient data	0.00	4.00	4.00
The overall score is an average of the four component scores.	Consumers respond to higher prices by decreasing consumption and some quit using tobacco.	In addition to price, change in affordability is critical. Cigarettes need to become less affordable for consumption to decline.	Large tax shares of price are usually a good indicator that taxes are working.	Best practices include relying more on uniform specific excise taxes that are adjusted regularly to outpace growth and inflation.

Learn more about the Scorecard in South Korea.

Regulations on Tobacco Advertising, Promotion, and Sponsorship (TAPS) in South Korea

Marketing is the key avenue that tobacco companies use to reach consumers, new and old. Restricting or eliminating marketing is key to tobacco control success.

Direct Bans	4 out of 7 direct bans implemented	Indirect Bans	1 out of 10 indirect bans implemented
National TV and radio	Yes	Free distribution in mail or through other means	No
International TV and radio	Yes	Promotional discounts	Yes
International magazines and newspapers	No	Non-tobacco products identified with tobacco brand names	No
International magazines and newspapers	No	Brand name of non-tobacco products used for tobacco product	No
Billboard and outdoor advertising	Yes	Appearance in TV and/or films: tobacco brands (product placement)	No
Advertising at point of sale	No	Appearance in TV and/or films: tobacco products	No
Advertising on internet	Yes	Prescribed anti-tobacco ads required for any visual entertainment media product that depicts tobacco products, use or images	No
Ad Ban Compliance		Complete ban on sponsorship	No
70%		Any form of contribution (financial or other support) to any event, activity or individual	No
		Ban on the publicity of financial or other sponsorship or support by the tobacco industry of events, activities, individuals	No