

Family Structure and Adolescent Cigarette/Alcohol Use*

"Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit." Ephesians 5:18

Growing up in an intact family helps safeguard adolescents from participating in risky behavior, like smoking and drinking. Social science research shows that:

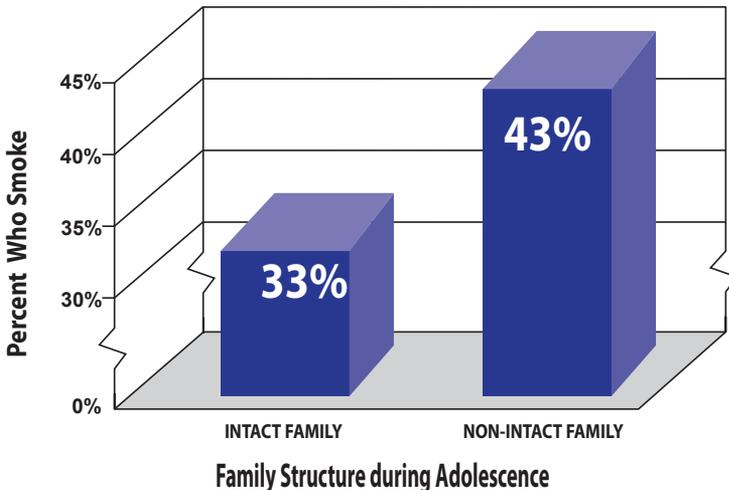
- 18 percent of adolescents living in two-parent homes said they had smoked in the last 30 days, compared with 31 percent in single-parent homes.
- The odds for adolescent drinking are 93 percent higher for cohabiting families than for intact families.
- The likelihood for teenage girls to start drinking nearly doubles from 19 percent to 37 percent among those who transition from a divorced single-parent family into a married stepfamily.
- The odds of alcohol initiation for boys in divorced single-parent families rise by 13 percent when they transition to stepfamilies.

Children's family structure impacts their willingness to smoke cigarettes or drink at an early age. As a parent your example of attending to God first will have a great protective effect on your child's use of alcohol. Are you a good role model for them?

The accompanying graph illustrates that children who grow up in intact, married families are less likely to smoke in adulthood. An adolescent's family structure shapes habits that can last a lifetime.

Smoking in Adulthood by Family Structure in Adolescence

Source: General Social Survey (GSS) 1972-2006



For links to the research behind these statements, please visit www.marri.us/one-pagers/

*It bears emphasizing that these patterns hold for the groups involved, not for all the individuals who make up each group. There is naturally a wide variation among individuals.



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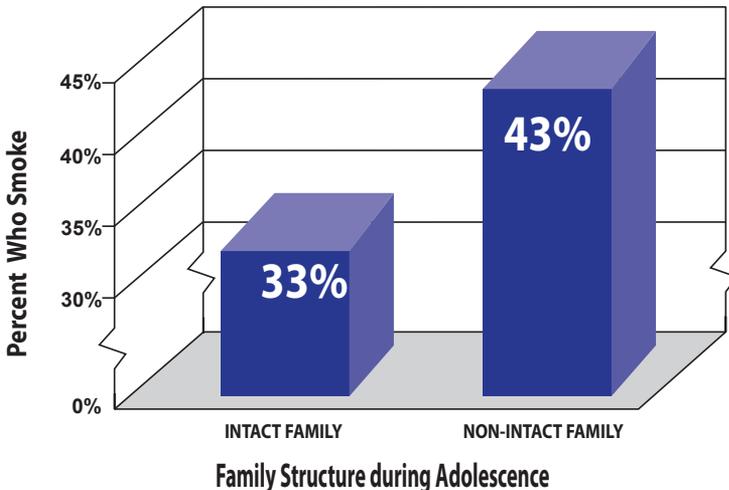
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