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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

**December 19, 2006**  
**For immediate release**

### **SMOKERS URGED TO QUIT FOR THEIR KIDS THIS CHRISTMAS**

Kiwis are being urged to quit smoking this Christmas to give themselves and their families a 'present for life'.

Ministry of Health figures released today show smoking prevalence continues to decline in New Zealand.

"Smoking is on its way out. Kiwis are increasingly a nation of non-smokers and that is incredibly important for the future health of our community," Cancer Society of New Zealand spokesperson, Belinda Hughes, said.

Ms Hughes noted, however, that smoking is still quite high among teenagers. Approximately 25% of 15-19 year olds smoke and she is encouraging parents to quit smoking to provide positive, healthy role models for their teenagers.

"Research shows that parents play an important role in keeping their teenagers smoke-free. It's important that parents understand that, in quitting smoking, they are paving the way for their teenagers to be smoke-free as well.

"If parents could quit smoking for their kids this Christmas, they would be giving them the best present of all."

People wanting to quit smoking should contact Quitline on 0800 778 778.

*For more information contact:*

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## **Tobacco Trends**

Key findings from the report include:

1. The prevalence of smoking in New Zealand in 2006 is 23.5%. Prevalence has decreased overall since the 1970s.
2. Highest smoking prevalence is seen among those aged 15-29 years, the lowest smoking prevalence is seen among those aged 50-64 years.
3. Overall, the prevalence of smoking in males (24%) is slightly higher than females (23%).
4. There is a higher prevalence of ex-daily smokers older than 20 years and a lower prevalence of current daily smokers over 40 years old.
5. Smoking rates are highest among Māori (45%) and Pacific people (37%), Māori females in particular have a very high rate of smoking (50%).
6. The prevalence of smoking in youth aged 15-19 years is 26.8%. In this age group, 25% are daily smokers and 70% identify themselves as being never smokers i.e. never having smoked daily.
7. Among Māori aged 15-19 years, females have a higher smoking prevalence (60%) compared to males (32%). The reverse is true among Pacific peoples, with 28% of females smoking compared to 46% males.

Online at:

<http://www.moh.govt.nz/moh.nsf/by+unid/152B30631AC2E55DCC2572450013FE5E?Open>

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