

E-Epidemic: Vaping and Youth

What You Need to Know

Youth vaping, or e-cigarette use, has skyrocketed and the federal government has declared it a nationwide epidemic. Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar stated:

“In the data sets we use, we have never seen use of any substance by America’s young people rise as rapidly as e-cigarette use is rising.”

The bottom line is that vaping is unsafe for kids, teens, and young adults. Getting accurate information about the youth vaping epidemic into the hands of our citizens is the first step to reverse the alarming trends.

Learn the Facts

- Youth vaping has increased dramatically across the country, including Florida.
In 2018, about 25 percent of Florida high school students reported current use of electronic vaping—a 58 percent increase compared to 2017.
- The FDA has stated that flavors play an important role in driving the youth appeal.
- E-cigarette companies claim that their products are intended for adults, but skyrocketing prevalence rates among teens tell a different story. In fact, teens are vaping at much higher rates compared to adults.
 - In the U.S, one in four high school students are vaping. Only about 3 percent of adults are vaping, according to the CDC.

The most popular e-cigarette brand is JUUL, a device shaped like a USB flash drive.

- The JUUL comes in a variety of flavors, is easy to conceal, and delivers high levels of nicotine.
- News outlets and social media sites have reported widespread use of JUUL by students in schools, including in classrooms and bathrooms.
- In December 2018, Marlboro cigarette maker AltriaGroup Inc. purchased a 35 percent stake in JUUL Labs Inc. for \$12.8 billion.
- JUUL now dominates the e-cigarette market. The company went from 2 percent market share in 2016 to 76 percent market share by the end of 2018.
- Other manufacturers have started making JUUL-look-a-like e-cigarette products.

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Know the Risks

- E-cigarette aerosol—aka “vapor”—is NOT harmless “water vapor,” as many youth mistakenly believe.
- The aerosol that users breathe from an e-cigarette device and exhale can contain harmful and potentially harmful substances including cancer-causing chemicals and heavy metals such as nickel, tin, and lead.
- While the long-term health effects of e-cigarettes are still unknown, some of the ingredients in e-cigarette aerosol could be harmful to your lungs.
- Evidence suggests that teens who use e-cigarettes may be at greater risk of starting to smoke regular cigarettes.
 - Cigarette smoking remains the single largest preventable cause of death and disease in the U.S.
- Many e-cigarettes, including JUUL, contain nicotine, which is highly addictive.
 - Teens may be more sensitive to nicotine and feel dependent on nicotine sooner compared to adults.
- The brain continues to develop until about age 25. The developing brain is more vulnerable to nicotine’s effects, including reduced impulse control, deficits in attention and cognition, and mood disorders.
- Using nicotine in your teens may also increase risk for future addiction to other drugs.
- A single JUUL pod (the liquid nicotine refill) contains as much nicotine as a pack of 20 regular cigarettes.
- JUUL uses nicotine salts, which can allow high levels of nicotine to be inhaled more easily and with less irritation.
- It is difficult for consumers to know what e-cigarette products contain. For example, some e-cigarettes marketed as containing zero percent nicotine have been found to contain nicotine.

You can help by educating yourself, dispelling myths among friends and family, and talking to your kids or students about the serious concerns around vaping and nicotine addiction.

For more information about the youth vaping epidemic, please visit tobaccofreeflorida.com/eepidemic.