

Key Facts

On Flavored Tobacco, Nicotine and Vapes



Flavored tobacco products attract and harm youth

- When tobacco products and e-cigarettes are sold in **flavors teens love**, like cotton candy, bubble gum and peanut butter cup, they continue to be attracted to trying and using them.
- The truth about both flavored tobacco and e-cigarette products is they most often contain nicotine, which is **addictive, toxic and can affect concentration, learning and impulse control**.
- There are more than **15,500 flavors** of e-cigarettes currently available online.
- 85% of e-cigarette users ages 12-17 **use flavored e-cigarettes**.
- When added to tobacco, **menthol flavoring makes it easier** to smoke and harder to quit.
- Teens who start smoking with menthol products are **twice as likely to become daily lifetime smokers**.

Nicotine is a real threat to youth

- Nicotine can **worsen anxiety** symptoms and increase feelings of depression.
- One Elf Bar contains **650mg of nicotine**, which equals 590 cigarettes.
- Vaping nicotine **damages the lungs** and harms the immune system.
- Nicotine content in e-cigarettes has **more than doubled in the past five years**.
- Teens are nearly **7x more likely to vape nicotine** than adults.
- Nicotine exposure at a young age increases the risk of more **severe dependence on nicotine**.
- **Nicotine is highly addictive** and can harm adolescent brain development, which continues into the early to mid-20s.

Vermont teens are at risk for addiction

- During the last 30 days, **16% of Vermont high schoolers** have used an e-cigarette product. Of those who vaped, **30% used it every day**.
- FDA issued a ban on cartridge-based nicotine flavored vaping products, **with the exception of tobacco and menthol**. Since the flawed policy was adopted, sales of all menthol vapes have jumped by 52%.
- The FDA policy still **allows mint, dessert and fruit flavors to be sold** in disposable e-cigarettes and refillable pods and mods, prompting teens to switch to those devices.
- **Disposable e-cigarette use** by high school students **increased approximately 1,000%** in 2019-2020.
- Teens who first try tobacco using a vape are **four times more likely to try cigarettes**, compared to teens who don't vape, and teens who first try tobacco using a vape are **three times more likely** to be current cigarette smokers within two years.
- **LGBTQ+ students** are significantly more likely than heterosexual/cisgender students to **use an e-cigarette during the past 30 days**.

Popularity of disposables, nicotine pouches and synthetic nicotine and why it's alarming

- From 2019 to 2020 **disposable e-cigarette use increased from 2.4% to 26.5%** (almost 1,000%) among high school students. Among middle schoolers who use e-cigarettes, disposable use increased from 3% to 15.2% (almost 400%).
- In 2023 the **five top-selling vape brands** were Vuse, JUUL, Elf Bar, ENJOY and Breeze Smoke, with Elf Bar emerging as the top-selling disposable brand.
- Puff Bar uses synthetic nicotine in their products. Synthetic nicotine allows for much higher strength and delivers less irritation of nicotine, making it more comfortable for new users. The **increased levels of nicotine negatively affect the heart, lungs and brain development** and can increase the risk of seizures.
- Disposable vapes, such as Elf Bar, continue to be popular among youth because **they are easy to hide, sleek and emit less aerosol** than other e-cigarettes.

Tobacco industry targets youth

- E-cigarettes are often falsely promoted as “**reduced risk,**” “**smoke-free,**” “**socially acceptable**” consumer products.
- Tobacco companies are **secretly advertising cigarettes on social media** platforms like Meta, X and TikTok by paying social media influencers.
- Many e-cigarette brands **now are marketed with “tobacco-free nicotine” or “synthetic nicotine,”** a claim that can imply lower risk and increase purchase intentions among teen users.
- **All cigarettes** — including those marketed as "natural," "organic" or "additive-free" — **have harmful substances** such as heavy metals, tar and carbon monoxide. This means that inhaling burnt tobacco of any kind is harmful.

Vermont's tobacco laws

- Tobacco substitutes containing nicotine, including **e-cigarettes**, can only be **sold by a retailer who is licensed** or has purchased their products from a licensed wholesaler. The law effectively bans retail sales by mail, phone or internet.
- Tobacco substitutes containing nicotine, **including e-cigarettes**, are subject to a **92% tax** on the wholesale cost.
- Vermont raised **the age to purchase tobacco products to 21**. This includes cigarettes, e-cigarettes and any other tobacco substitute that contains nicotine.