



Addressing Tobacco Use Among Youth and Young Adults

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Glossary

Cessation interventions refer to various educational, pharmacological and behavioral strategies aimed at helping individuals addicted to tobacco and vaping products quit using at a personal, interpersonal and/or community level.

Electronic Smoking Devices (ENDs) are devices allowing users to inhale an aerosol containing nicotine or other substances. Electronic smoking devices are tobacco products. Vapes, vaporizers, vape pens, hookah pens, electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes or e-cigs) and e-pipes are some of the many terms used to describe them.

Menthol is a chemical naturally found in peppermint and other mint plants, but it can also be made in a lab. When added to tobacco products, it reduces the harshness of cigarette smoke and the irritation from nicotine.

Nicotine is a highly addictive, colorless, odorless and toxic chemical compound. It is present in the tobacco plant and it can also be made in the laboratory. It is also used as an insecticide.

Nicotine Replacement Therapies (NRTs), such as gum, patches, inhalers, nasal spray and lozenges, are FDA-approved treatments that can help tobacco users quit. These products provide a lower level of nicotine that can help reduce recovery symptoms while the person transitions to a new tobacco-free life. Nicotine replacement therapies are not tobacco products.

Prevention interventions refer to educational strategies aimed to help prevent the initiation of tobacco use among youth and adults, as well as prevent the initiation and continuation of these tobacco-use behaviors within the home and in the community.

The tobacco industry refers to the tobacco product manufacturers, distributors, wholesalers and retailers that have historically used their significant financial resources to promote tobacco use and influence policy and public opinion around tobacco products.

Tobacco products are any product containing, made of, or derived from tobacco or nicotine that are intended for human consumption and include cigarettes, cigars, pipe tobacco, chewing tobacco, snuff, nicotine pouches or electronic smoking devices. They can be smoked, heated, chewed, absorbed, dissolved, inhaled or ingested by any other means. Tobacco products as used in this guide refer to commercial tobacco products and nicotine products, not the tobacco and/or other plant mixtures grown or harvested and used by American Indians and Indigenous people for sacred purposes. The Lung Association recognizes that traditional and commercial tobacco are different in the way that they are planted and grown, harvested, prepared and used. Learn more about Traditional vs. Commercial Tobacco at [KeepItSacred.ITCMI.org](https://www.KeepItSacred.ITCMI.org).

Tobacco-related disparities refer to socioeconomic and health disparities that are caused and/or exacerbated by tobacco and vaping product use and addiction, and which can be improved or eliminated by addressing the tobacco use.

Youth and young adults refers to individuals in early, middle or late adolescence. Use of the term is intended to reflect those under the age of 24, including school-aged children, teens and young adults for whom tobacco use has a significant impact. Youth and young adults are vulnerable to tobacco-use experimentation, initiation and nicotine dependence. Their experiences can be impacted by various factors, including family, community, race/ethnicity and poverty, which can increase their risk of facing multiple adversities. See more at [Youth.gov](https://www.Youth.gov) and [Office of Population Affairs](https://www.OfficeofPopulationAffairs.gov).

Why Addressing Tobacco Use Early On Matters

Cigarette smoking alone remains the number one cause of preventable death in the United States¹—that's not even taking into account other forms of commercial tobacco use. And for the almost 90% of adults who currently smoke daily today, it's an addiction that began before age 18.² Preventing youth and young adults from using tobacco in the first place, or helping those who start to effectively quit, is instrumental to saving lives and creating a healthier future for all.

The American Lung Association is encouraged to see use of e-cigarettes among middle and high school students decline from the epidemic highs of 5.4 million youth to 1.6 million regular users. Youth tobacco use, including vaping, continues to be a serious public health concern and we cannot afford to become complacent. No level of youth use of any tobacco product is safe, nor acceptable. It is deeply troubling that of the youth who vape, more than a quarter (26.3%) do so daily, which shows a high addiction rate. We all must work together to prevent youth from starting to use tobacco and ensure that there are resources available to help teens quit all tobacco products for good. The American Lung Association remains committed to a tobacco-free future where no child is addicted to tobacco products.

- Harold Wimmer

President and CEO of the American Lung Association

The American Lung Association aims to provide appropriate resources to prevent and reduce commercial tobacco use among youth and young adults in the United States (U.S.). Over the past several decades, the growing understanding of tobacco-related disparities among youth and young adults has led the American Lung Association to prioritize the development and implementation of innovative approaches to address tobacco use within this priority population. The resources included in this toolkit will serve to strengthen the knowledge that individuals (e.g., educators, social service providers, healthcare providers, researchers, etc.), public officials/lawmakers and/or organizations (e.g., community-based organizations, faith-based organizations, clinics, academic centers, recreational centers, etc.) have regarding tobacco use, prevention and cessation to better serve youth and young adults.



Current State of Tobacco Use in Youth and Young Adults

Many factors contribute to the initiation and use of tobacco products for these populations—everything from family influence and peer pressure to enticing flavors and tobacco industry marketing.

E-Cigarette Use Is Moving in the Right Direction Among Youth and Young Adults, But Nicotine Pouch Rates Are on the Rise.³

While smoking by adolescents and young adults has substantially declined over the last 40 years, there's still much work to be done. Points of serious concern include: the frequent use of e-cigarettes, indicating high addiction rates; the recent rise in the use of extremely addictive nicotine pouches; not to mention the flood of flavored products throughout the market with the goal of attracting kids.

- The National Youth Tobacco Survey found that more than 1.6 million middle and high school students currently use e-cigarettes, with more than 1 in 4 using them daily.³
- The most common devices are disposables.³
- Of those who use e-cigarettes, almost 90% use flavored e-cigarettes and over half of students report using flavors with “ice” or “iced” in the name.³
- Between 81% and 86% of youth and young adults who've ever used tobacco reported a flavored product as their first tobacco product.³
- The National Youth Tobacco Survey also found a slight increase in the usage of nicotine pouches among students, from 1.5% in 2023 to 1.8% in 2024, with more than 2 in 10 using them daily.³
- Like e-cigarettes, almost 90% use flavored nicotine pouches, with mint flavors being the most popular, followed by fruit.³



Menthol Products Are on the Rise—And Even Harder to Quit.

Menthol is a chemical that makes cigarettes easier to smoke and harder to quit.⁴ Found naturally in mint plants, menthol creates a cooling effect that reduces the harshness of cigarette smoke and suppresses coughing.⁴ This makes menthol cigarettes more appealing to young or inexperienced smokers, and research shows that they are more likely to addict youth.⁴

- Data from nationally representative samples show that the youngest age groups use menthol at the highest rates.^{5,6}
- The proportion of smokers using menthol cigarettes is increasing among youth. According to the National Survey Drug and Health, while use of non-menthol cigarettes has decreased, the percentage of teens who use menthol cigarettes has increased.^{5,7}
- CDC studies show that youth and young adults are more likely to try a menthol cigarette as their first cigarette, rather than a non-menthol cigarette. And those who start with a menthol cigarette are more likely to continue smoking.⁸
- In 2023, among middle school and high school students:
 - 40.4% of those who smoked cigarettes reported using menthol cigarettes.
 - 17.4% of those who used flavored smokeless tobacco used menthol smokeless tobacco.
 - 21.4% of those who used flavored e-cigarettes used menthol e-cigarettes.
 - 16.5% of those who used flavored cigars used menthol cigars.⁸
 - In 2024, which saw a slight rise in nicotine pouch sales, 19.3% of those who used flavored nicotine pouches used menthol pouches.³
- Some populations are more likely to smoke menthol cigarettes, due in part to aggressive and targeted tobacco industry marketing. These include Black or African American people, Hispanic or Latino people, women, the LGBTQ+ community, people with lower levels of income and young adults with serious mental health conditions.

Cigars, Especially Flavored, Are as Popular as Cigarettes Among Youth.⁹

For tobacco tax purposes, cigars are defined differently than cigarettes, which leads to state taxes on cigars being significantly less than on cigarettes in many states—yet a single cigar can contain as much nicotine as an entire pack of cigarettes.³

- The 2023 National Youth Tobacco Survey found that close to 65% of youth who smoke cigars use flavored cigars.¹⁰
- Black youth have the highest rate of cigar use.¹¹



Barriers to Quitting

Research shows that more than half of youth who currently use tobacco products have seriously considered quitting.¹² So what's getting in the way? We know that quitting can be difficult for anyone if they do not have the support or resources. And for youth, in particular, many of whom keep their tobacco use a secret from parents and other adults, this often means not receiving adequate support or evidence-based resources to quit and stay tobacco-free. Other factors like limited awareness in rural areas and lack of transportation to intervention and cessation programs can also get in the way.

Barrier: Fear of Confidentiality, Consequences or Embarrassment

In a recent study that asked students about cessation support programs at schools,¹³ youth shared their thoughts on why they or someone who uses tobacco may not participate. The top concern mentioned was confidentiality. Students didn't want to get in trouble with parents or schools, or be labeled for using vapes or other tobacco products. They also mentioned that some individuals might be too proud or embarrassed to admit they need help.

Takeaway: When youth come to their trusted adult for help, it is important that the adult provide support in their journey to quit, instead of reprimanding them.

Barrier: Punishment vs. Support Within Schools

Many schools utilize punitive measures, such as suspension or expulsion, as disciplinary actions for tobacco policy infractions. These practices often alienate students, rather than give them the support they need to quit and make healthier choices. Restorative practices are needed to help students understand the truths about tobacco, the harm it causes, what nicotine dependence looks like and paths they can take for a tobacco-free future.

Takeaway: When given suspension alternatives and brief intervention, along with appropriate referrals for cessation resources, students are more likely to consider tobacco-free futures.

Barrier: Limited Education and Awareness, Especially in Rural Areas

Tobacco companies spend \$8.6 billion dollars a year on marketing.¹⁴ Unfortunately, tobacco prevention and cessation support programs do not have the same funding levels to adequately promote services and educate. This leads to areas in our nation not providing or providing limited education and support to youth.

Not surprisingly, youth in rural areas are less likely to hear anti-tobacco messages,¹⁵ which are key for initiating cessation treatment. Oftentimes, cessation and educational programs are offered more frequently and widespread in urban areas, due to increased reach with higher populations.

Takeaway: Youth empowerment programs at schools or in communities can be a powerful, low-cost tool for educating on the dangers of tobacco use and spreading tobacco-free messages in these areas.

Some youth may not realize they are addicted to nicotine in the first place or be aware of the programs and resources available to help them quit, including programs can be completed in person, online, or via phone or text.

Takeaway: Tobacco education and information about the various local quit programs should be made available in multiple places, such as schools, community settings and health centers, to increase reach and awareness. Healthcare providers, school nurses and trusted adults should all do their part to make referrals and help students get the support they need to quit.

Barrier: Lack of Peer Support

Youth are especially vulnerable to social influence as they try to fit in with their peers. Studies have found that a majority of Americans agree that peer pressure is the most influential cause leading youth to utilize tobacco. Tobacco companies have also agreed that peer pressure is a primary reason that youth begin using tobacco products.¹⁶ Youth who have friends who use tobacco products are more likely to do so themselves compared to those whose friends do not use. Regarding peer pressure and tobacco use, this can take many forms, including but not limited to peer encouragement of use, dares, media and providing the actual products for use.

Takeaway: Peer influence can either encourage or discourage tobacco product use, depending on a range of factors such as social influence, gender differences, complex dynamics, cultures and familial influence. Understanding these dynamics helps address tobacco prevention and intervention strategies—and emphasizes the importance of youth empowerment programs to encourage a tobacco-free life.

Barrier: Presence in Entertainment Industry and Social Media

Even if their peers aren't using tobacco products, youth are encountering tobacco use in the movies, shows and music videos they stream as well as the social media accounts they follow. A 2022 report from Truth Initiative and partners found that 60% of shows most popular with young people included tobacco imagery.¹⁷ Additionally, in a survey of Texas middle and high school students, 52.5% reported exposure to tobacco-related social media in the past month,¹⁸ while a national study showed that exposure to tobacco-related social media alone is associated with e-cigarette use.¹⁹ This prevalence of tobacco use in today's culture continues to be a concern, as it normalizes the behavior, often leading to initiation and making it harder for youth to quit.

Takeaway: There's more work to be done when it comes to public health groups and policymakers stepping in to help reduce on-screen tobacco use. In the meantime, social media can and should be a powerful tool used for sharing the truth about tobacco and promoting prevention messages to young people.

Barrier: Low Socioeconomic Status

Youth from lower socioeconomic backgrounds may encounter barriers to participating in tobacco education, prevention and cessation activities for multiple reasons:

They may have more adults in their lives who use tobacco products and, therefore, are more likely to use tobacco products themselves.²⁰

Takeaway: It is important for youth-serving programs to state that they are not against tobacco users, but against the manipulations of the tobacco industry toward youth and young adults.

Transportation to and from extracurricular activities can keep youth from lower socioeconomic backgrounds from attending tobacco cessation meetings. Food insecurity is often experienced by this group as well and can take priority over other activities.

Takeaway: When possible, hold meetings during the school day to avoid having to arrange transportation or hold after-school or weekend meetings in a neighborhood location to which participants can walk. Serve food during meetings and provide pre-packaged snacks to take home from meetings.

Students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds may experience delays in reading skills²¹ and, therefore, be reluctant to participate in activities that require regular reading.

Takeaway: Giving students information and instructions to read ahead of time, or pairing students for reading activities, may help alleviate some anxiety.



Health Equity

Health equity and health equality are not the same, and it is important to understand the differences between them. Health equity recognizes that each person comes from different circumstances and may need different resources to achieve an equal outcome. Health equality simply divides resources equally without regard to the unique circumstances each individual may face. This can actually perpetuate inequality rather than address it.

Despite advances in medicine, health equity has not been achieved. Underrepresented persons in the U.S., including youth and young adults, are distinctly impacted and so don't receive the resources they need for equal health outcomes. To better serve youth and young adults in the U.S., it is urgent that the concept of "one size fits all" be abandoned for good and replaced with a more inclusive way of thinking and addressing health outcomes. As part of this, it is imperative to understand the behaviors, needs and preferences of today's youth and young adults, especially those from marginalized groups, to influence the health outcomes of tomorrow. Reducing overall youth tobacco use is important to achieving health equity among youth and young adults to prevent future disparities while helping to build resiliency. Everyone deserves to be as healthy as they can be, and that means living free from the harmful effects of commercial tobacco use. By increasing efforts to better serve youth and young adults, we can advance health equity and build a healthy future for generations to come.

Understanding the Tobacco Industry's Marketing Ploys

The tobacco industry's success is founded upon its industrious marketing across all channels, using techniques that are aimed at increasing product engagement rates, brand loyalty and, ultimately, addiction to their products.

In 2021, the tobacco industry spent \$8.6 billion on advertising and promotion of cigarettes and smokeless tobacco combined.²²⁻²³ This amounts to over \$23.5 million expended every day and nearly \$1 million every hour. Unfortunately, this spending far exceeds the budgets states are employing annually for tobacco prevention and control programs. In fiscal year 2023, states collected \$26.7 billion from tobacco taxes and the tobacco Master Settlement Agreement; however, only \$733 million of the total collections went toward tobacco prevention and cessation programs²⁴—despite multiple studies in various states showing that the larger and longer the investment in tobacco prevention, the greater the impact on quit rates.²⁵

What's more, when looking at the tobacco industry's marketing budget, the two largest expenditures in 2021 were price discounts paid to cigarette retailers and wholesalers, accounting for 86% of all cigarette marketing or more than \$6.9 billion.²²⁻²³ These discounts reduce the price point of cigarettes for consumers, which has an extremely significant effect on youth smoking, as it has been shown that every 10% increase in the price of cigarettes actually reduces youth consumption by 7%.²⁶ Discounts and retail value-added promotions can even negate the impact of state cigarette tax increases in some cases.



The Effects of Advertising on Youth and Young Adults

- The 2012 Surgeon General's report on preventing tobacco use among youth concluded that there is a causal relationship between tobacco industry advertising and promotional efforts and the initiation and progression of tobacco use among young people.²⁷
- A 2014 study highlights that the more cigarette or vaping ads a teen sees, the more likely they are to try smoking—and 7 out of 10 middle school and high school students report seeing e-cigarette ads.²⁸
- A 2018 study found that the top three preferred tobacco brands among middle and high school students were also the top three most advertised brands.²⁹
- Among U.S. youth, 41% of 12–13-year-olds and 50% of older adolescents were receptive to at least one tobacco advertisement. Receptivity to advertising for each tobacco product was associated with increased susceptibility to cigarette smoking.³⁰
- One study found that cigarette ads may cause teens to feel like smoking would make them popular, sophisticated, attractive or tough.²⁸

How Do Tobacco Companies Target Specific Populations?

- Certain tobacco products are advertised and promoted disproportionately to specific racial or ethnic groups. For example, advertising and promotion of cigarette brands with names such as Rio, Dorado and American Spirit have been marketed toward Hispanics, American Indians and Alaska Natives.³¹
- Since the 1980s, the tobacco industry has intentionally targeted the Hispanic or Latino communities, seeing these consumers as a young, growing, geographically concentrated and brand loyal market. Even R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Company noted, “Second only to [the] growth [of this population], the reason for targeting Hispanics lies in their geographic concentration.”³²
- The tobacco industry uses price promotions such as discounts on products like cigarillos and little cigars in neighborhoods with a higher concentration of Hispanic or Latino people.³³
- Similarly, Black people are disproportionately exposed to cigarette advertisements, particularly for menthol brands. A 2013 study found that Black youth are better able to recognize menthol cigarette advertisements than peers of different ethnicities because of their increased exposure to advertisements found in community stores.³⁴
- Researchers found that stores in predominantly Black neighborhoods were up to 10 times more likely to display tobacco ads than retailers in areas with fewer Black residents.³⁵
- Historically, tobacco companies have tailored their marketing to maintain a positive image in communities they target by financially supporting cultural events and making contributions to historically Black educational institutions, elected officials, civic and community organizations and scholarship programs.³⁶
- Tobacco companies often use price promotions such as discounts and multi-pack coupons—which are mostly utilized by Black Americans, other minority groups, women and youth—to increase sales.³⁶
- The tobacco industry was one of the first to develop marketing materials specifically targeting the LGBTQ community. The most infamous example of this was so-called Project SCUM (for “Subculture Urban Marketing”), a plan by RJ Reynolds in the mid-1990s to market their Red Kamel brand to gay men in San Francisco’s Castro District and homeless people in the city’s Tenderloin neighborhood.³⁷
- Ads for smokeless tobacco frequently depict rugged “manly” images of cowboys, hunters and race car drivers that are carefully placed in the media and retail outlets most likely to reach rural audiences. It seems to work well; a 2012 study of boys and men in Appalachian Ohio found that the participants viewed smokeless tobacco use as a rite of passage in the development of their masculine identity, and a key to acceptance into male social networks.³⁸



The Way Forward: Taking a Multi-Tiered Approach

Evidence-based, population-level strategies that align with a comprehensive approach to address vaping and menthol tobacco product use are needed. Whether at the federal, state or community level, parents, teachers, youth/young adult leaders, health professionals and even youth themselves can take action to make a difference. The American Lung Association recommends a multi-tiered approach that encourages everyone to get involved:

Reducing commercial tobacco use among youth and young adults demands innovative, affordable and accessible solutions.

Cessation

Supporting teens who use tobacco and want to quit.

Intervention

Providing alternative programming to suspensions/citations for identified teens who use tobacco and violators of the tobacco-free campus policy.

Prevention

Educating students on the dangers of vaping and other tobacco product use.

Policy Change

Advocating for tobacco control that limits access and exposure for youth and young adults.

Education

Training school personnel, parents and clinicians on how to conduct a brief intervention for teens who use tobacco.

Youth Empowerment

Promoting activism at the middle school, high school and college levels.

Youth Empowerment: The Foundation of a Tobacco-Free Future

Across the country, youth and adolescents are banning together to keep their communities tobacco-free. The American Lung Association recently launched their [Youth Empowerment Portal on Lung.org](https://www.lung.org/youth-empowerment-portal) to encourage youth and young adults to help build, participate and live in a world free of lung disease. The portal is a great resource for schools or communities looking to become a part of their state's student-led movement or for existing groups to find information and inspiration to spur action and create a healthier future for all.

Youth Tobacco-Free Programs by State

These youth leaders seek to stay informed about the real dangers of tobacco product use and find creative ways to share that knowledge with their peers. Contact your local American Lung Association office, or call 1-800-LUNGUSA, for information on these American Lung Association-managed statewide youth leadership groups and other youth tobacco initiatives near you.



STAND AZ in Arizona – Students Taking A New Direction



KBG in Delaware – Kick Butts Generations



Tobacco-Free Rhode Island



FACT in Wisconsin



RAZE in West Virginia



TRU in Pennsylvania – Tobacco Resistance Unit for youth



Reality Check in New York

Young Adult Tobacco-Free Programs by State

Advocating for a tobacco-free future shouldn't stop after high school. These young adult programs continue to expose the lies of the tobacco industry and educate on college campuses and beyond. Contact your local American Lung Association office, or call 1-800-LUNGUSA, for information on young adult leadership groups and other young adult tobacco initiatives near you.



DANTE in Delaware – Delawareans Against Nicotine and Tobacco Exposure on college campuses



Spark in Wisconsin – Igniting change on college campuses



Tobacco-Free Rhode Island



TRU+ in Pennsylvania – Tobacco Resistance Unit for young adults

Education: Arming Schools and Health Professionals with Evidence-Based Tools and Training

Making sure teachers, coaches, youth leaders and health professionals are prepared to support youth and young adults in their individual journeys to live tobacco-free is an important step. The American Lung Association offers programs that focus on building awareness of the different types of commercial tobacco products, the serious health risks of any tobacco use, as well as proven, non-punitive ways to help teens and young adults quit for good.

Beginner: Tobacco Basics

The American Lung Association's Tobacco Basics is a free one-hour online course including five learning modules designed to lay the foundation in understanding the toll of commercial tobacco use in the U.S. In this course, participants will learn the difference between commercial tobacco products, including e-cigarettes and vaping devices; the effects of commercial tobacco use on the human body and brain; nicotine dependence and why quitting is so challenging; proven policies that protect public health from the toll of commercial tobacco; and the programs available to help all commercial tobacco users successfully quit for good.

Advanced: Ask-Counsel-Treat (ACT) to Address Youth Cessation

This no-cost, one-hour, on-demand, online course provides an overview for school personnel, community members in youth-supportive roles and healthcare professionals to conduct a brief intervention for teens who use tobacco. Based on the [American Academy of Pediatrics' Youth Tobacco Cessation: Considerations for Clinicians](#), the course outlines the steps of Ask-Counsel-Treat and provides guidance, support and best practices for effectively delivering ACT as a brief intervention for adolescents who identify as tobacco users, including e-cigarettes.

Tobacco Health Risks Increase for Youth With Asthma

Tobacco use leads to serious health problems. And for the 5.5 million children who have asthma, those problems only get worse.³⁹

With asthma, a chronic lung disease that makes it harder to move air in and out of the lungs, there is always a little bit of swelling inside the airways of the lungs. This makes the airways extra sensitive when exposed to viruses, allergens and irritants, including tobacco smoke and the many dangerous chemicals found in tobacco products.

In addition to implementing tobacco-free campus policies to help protect this group from harmful exposure, it's equally important that young people with asthma are made aware of the unique risks they face should they use tobacco. These risks are not only health-related, but also include missed school and extracurricular activities, which can negatively impact future goals over time.



Children ages 5–17 years have the highest current asthma prevalence rates compared to other age groups.³⁹



Children less than 5 years of age have the highest asthma attack rates compared to other age groups.³⁹



In 2018, 2.2 million children aged 5–17 years missed more than 7.9 million school days.³⁹

Policy Change: Making a Difference at Local, State and National Levels

Public policy is fundamental to the prevention and cessation of commercial tobacco use. The American Lung Association is cognizant of the role it plays in influencing public policies that work to end the disproportionate effects of tobacco in the U.S. for youth and minorities and this dangerous epidemic altogether. The Lung Association has outlined a bold 12-point advocacy plan to achieve these goals:

1. States, cities and counties must **include e-cigarettes in all smokefree** laws
2. Congress, states, counties and cities must **raise the tax on e-cigarettes** to parity with cigarettes and other tobacco products
3. FDA, states and localities must **invest in tobacco prevention** efforts, including state programs and mass marketing campaigns
4. Federal, state and local governments must ensure every **tobacco user can get the help they need to quit**
5. Congress, states, counties and cities must **raise the minimum age of sale to 21**
6. FDA, Congress, states, cities must immediately **remove all flavored tobacco products** from the marketplace
7. Congress and/or FDA must **prohibit online sales** of all tobacco products
8. FDA must crack down on and **stop misleading health** claims
9. States, cities and counties **must end the use of coupons** and other discounts that make these products cheaper and more appealing to young people
10. FDA and FTC must **halt advertising and marketing to kids**, including on social media
11. FDA must **issue a product standard** prohibiting all flavored tobacco products that defines what “tobacco” flavor means
12. FDA must **require “track and trace”** technology on all tobacco products to prevent black market, counterfeit and smuggling activities

ACCOMPLISHED



Join the Lung Action Network

A lack of political will is the primary reason policy change has yet to occur. Individuals must speak up and advocate at the local, state and national levels for policies to reduce the disproportionate burden caused by tobacco. [Joining the Lung Action Network](#) is an easy way to make one’s voice heard on issues that directly impact lung health. To learn more and understand the measures required to eliminate the death and disease caused by tobacco use, review our annual [State of Tobacco Control](#) report.



Vape-Free Schools Initiative: Driving Change on Campuses

The American Lung Association Vape-Free Schools Initiative supports and recognizes educators and community members committed to helping students navigate the youth vaping epidemic with clear guidance, education and cessation. Members receive exclusive access to promotional resources to share with parents, school personnel, students and the surrounding community following their completion of:

- The INDEPTH or N-O-T Facilitator Course Training – to provide intervention and cessation programs for nicotine dependence
- A Vape-Free Schools Initiative Policy Assessment – to help strengthen current campus policies and create a comprehensive public health approach to countering the e-cigarette epidemic

Prevention: Incorporating the Dangers of Tobacco Use into Curriculums and Conversations

Adolescence (ages 12 to 18) and young adulthood (ages 18 to 24) are periods characterized by nicotine and tobacco use initiation and progression to long-term addiction—but these periods are also critical windows for prevention and cessation interventions to produce long-term reductions in tobacco use, morbidity and mortality. Incorporating education into the classroom and at home helps empower youth to make healthy choices for themselves. Due to the popularity of e-cigarettes and other emerging tobacco and nicotine products among youth and young adults—and their serious health effects for these age groups—it is recommended that educators and caregivers focus prevention efforts on vaping and these emerging products.

What do we know about vaping among youths and young adults?

- E-cigarettes have completely transformed the landscape of tobacco use in youth, combining advanced technology and attractive design, fueled by aggressive marketing and social media promotion.
- There is sufficient evidence that e-cigarette use during adolescence is associated with future initiation of cigarette, marijuana and alcohol use.^{40–42}
- Early nicotine use puts youth at risk for a lifetime of addiction and unknown health risks associated with long-term e-cigarette or other tobacco or nicotine product use.
- Health risks are even more severe for young people with asthma.
- Exposure to nicotine in adolescence creates measurable—and sometimes irreversible—changes in brain chemistry and biology.
- Chemical and heavy metal exposure from e-cigarettes and risk of toxicity and injuries are public health concerns.



Evidence-Based Vaping Prevention Programs (Grades 5–12)



CATCH My Breath

Developed by The University of Texas School of Public Health (UTHealth), this vape education program is designed to help students ages 10–18 make healthy choices and avoid risky behaviors when it comes to e-cigarettes. Curriculum incorporates health education standards for each grade level as well as engaging supplemental activities for STEM/Humanities/PE and more.



The Real Cost™ E-Cigarette Prevention Campaign

The FDA's public education campaign focuses on educating youth about the dangers of e-cigarette use. The campaign leans into the "cost-free" mentality of middle and high schoolers and shows them how using e-cigarettes puts them at risk for addiction and other serious health consequences.



Stanford Medicine's Tobacco Prevention & Vaping Toolkit

Designed for educators to customize curriculum based on grade level and setting, this theory-based and evidence-informed resource is designed to educate students about the dangers of tobacco products, make them aware of the ploys tobacco marketing companies use and help them practice refusing tobacco. Materials also help guide teachers and administration to create school policies.



#DoTheVapeTalk (Families)

A youth vaping awareness campaign from the American Lung Association and the Ad Council. It provides caregivers with a simple road map for addressing the dangers of vaping with their kids and includes free educational resources, like a conversation guide.

Intervention and Cessation: Helping Youth and Young Adults Quit Smoking and Vaping

Every day, almost 1,500 children under 18 years of age try their first cigarette, and more than 100 of them will become new, regular daily smokers.⁴³ If current tobacco use patterns persist, an estimated 5.6 million of today's youth under age 18 eventually will die prematurely from a smoking-related disease.³⁴ The American Lung Association has developed proven programs to help this age group break free from tobacco's deadly grip. For additional promotional and educational information regarding the following programs, please refer to the Resource section on [page 6](#).



Cessation: In-person/Virtual

Not On Tobacco® (N-O-T) is the American Lung Association's voluntary quit tobacco program for teens ages 13–19. Over the 10 sessions, participants learn to identify their reasons for using tobacco or nicotine products, healthy alternatives to tobacco use and people who will support them in their efforts to quit. [Learn more about N-O-T](#) and how you can become a facilitator today.



Intervention: In-person/Virtual

The American Lung Association's Intervention for Nicotine Dependence: Education, Prevention, Tobacco and Health (**INDEPTH®**) is an alternative for students who face suspension for violation of school tobacco, vaping or nicotine use policies. Students participate in a series of interactive educational sessions administered by an adult facilitator in either a one-on-one or group format in a school or community-based setting. [Learn more about INDEPTH®](#) and how you can start a program.



Intervention: Online

Now available for students to access online. *Students are referred into the program by their school facilitator and enroll in the program at [INDEPTHOnline.org](https://www.indepthonline.org). This interactive, four-module program teaches students about nicotine dependence, establishing healthy alternatives and making the change to be free of all tobacco products, including e-cigarettes.*

Facilitators must register their school and, once approved, can refer students into the online program. Schools can monitor students' progress and completion on the dashboard. Students who successfully complete the program receive a certificate of completion. Go to [INDEPTHOnline.org](https://www.indepthonline.org) to register your school today and start referring students!



Teen Cessation: Online

NOT for Me is a self-guided, online program that leverages the American Lung Association's evidence-based N-O-T Not On Tobacco® program to help teens break nicotine dependency, no matter what tobacco products they use. To register, please visit our website [NotforMe.org](https://www.notforme.org).

Young Adult Cessation: In-person/Virtual and Online

Freedom From Smoking® is one of the most effective adult cessation programs in the country, featuring evidence-based, proven techniques for quitting all types of commercial tobacco products, including e-cigarettes and vaping devices. Available in a variety of formats—in-person, online and self-guided—and complemented by additional support services and resources, the program helps participants create a personalized plan of action to quit and stay tobacco-free.

Ongoing Support to Share with Youth and Young Adults

Tobacco cessation is a process, and outside supports are critical. Treatment extenders, such as web-based quit supports, text-message cessation programs, and telephone quitlines have the expertise and capacity to provide youth who use tobacco with ongoing support throughout their quit attempt.

- [American Lung Association's Teen Quit Plan](#)
- [Build My Vaping Quit Plan](#)
- [quitSTART App](#)
- [SmokefreeTXT for Teens](#)
- [Speak to an Expert](#)
- [SmokefreeUS on Instagram](#)

American Lung Association Lung HelpLine and Tobacco QuitLine

Program Name	Population/Language	Program Details	Availability
1-800-QUIT-NOW	English	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free and confidential • Speak with trained health professionals • Tailored support for individual needs 	All 50 states, Washington DC, Puerto Rico, Guam. Youth-specific services vary by jurisdiction. See State-Specific Information for more details
1-800-LUNG-USA	English <i>In addition, there are bilingual Spanish speaking staff along with a live language interpretation service for over 250 languages.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Lung HelpLine is staffed with licensed registered nurses, respiratory therapists and certified tobacco treatment specialists • Answers to all of lung-health related questions and connection to resources 	American Lung Association's Lung Helpline is available in all 50 states and Washington DC
1-855-DÉJALO-YA	Spanish	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free and confidential • Speak with trained health professionals • Tailored support for individual needs 	All 50 states, Washington DC, Puerto Rico, Guam. Youth-specific services by state. Find tailored information from Smokefree.gov
1-855-5AI-QUIT	American Indian	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free and confidential • Speak with trained health professionals • Tailored support for individual needs Phone support with optional email and text support • Sponsored by National Jewish Health 	Colorado, Idaho, Iowa, Kansas, Massachusetts, Michigan, Nevada, North Dakota, Pennsylvania, Utah, Vermont, Wyoming
Asian Smokers Quitline (ASQ)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free and confidential • Speak with trained health professionals • Tailored support for individual needs 	Youth-specific services by state. Find tailored information from the Asian Smokers Quitline (ASQ) website
1-800-838-8917	Mandarin & Cantonese		
1-800-566-5564	Korean		
1-800-778-8440	Vietnamese		

Best Practices

Families, teachers, coaches, community youth leaders and clinicians can all play an active role in encouraging a tobacco-free lifestyle. The following best practices are intended to help adults best support individuals in these impressionable—and increasingly independent—age groups.

Families



Educate Yourself

Know the different kinds of tobacco and nicotine products on the market and the dangers they pose to youth.



Set a Positive Example

If you currently use tobacco, enroll in a quit program and prioritize your health for yourself and your family.



Start the Conversation

Don't wait until it's too late to talk to your kids about vaping or smoking, the irreversible health effects and how to handle peer pressure.



Support, Don't Punish

If you discover your child is using tobacco, avoid punitive measures. They aren't effective because they don't treat the problem, which is that your child may already be addicted to nicotine. Instead, efforts should be focused on getting them the support and treatment they need to successfully quit.



Avoid Scare Tactics

When you talk with your kids, focus on connecting and keeping communication lines open. Instead of creating fear, listen to their perspectives and show how tobacco use can get in the way of their personal goals.



Monitor Their Media

Pay attention to what your kids are watching on TV, including streaming services, and social media. Seeing tobacco use in entertainment normalizes the behavior and can make youth more likely to try substances. Limit their exposure and use these instances as a teaching moment to talk about tobacco dangers.



Schools and Community Organizations



Educate Your Team

Make sure staff members know the different kinds of tobacco products on the market and the dangers they pose to youth.



Teach the Dangers

Incorporate tobacco education and prevention into the curriculum to arm students with the truth and get ahead of messages they will encounter from the tobacco industry.



Out of Site, Out of Mind

Institute and enforce a tobacco-free policy to keep school grounds and community buildings free from commercial tobacco and nicotine products, helping set a healthy environment and example for youth and young adults.



Support, Don't Punish

If you discover a student is using tobacco or violating tobacco-free campus policies, avoid punitive measures. They aren't effective because they don't treat the problem, which is that many adolescents are already addicted to nicotine; therefore, efforts at school should be focused on programs that can help them quit.

Say No to School Suspensions

Studies have shown that removing students from school in response to tobacco use or tobacco-free policy violations only leads to more negative consequences, including but not limited to decreased likelihood to graduate on time, increases in grade repetition and dropout, and an increased likelihood of involvement with the criminal court system.⁴⁴ Furthermore, isolating those struggling with nicotine addiction fails to provide them with the supportive network they need to successfully quit and often only increases their use and prolongs addiction.⁴⁴ The American Lung Association recommends schools offer programs on-site to help students quit or connect them with resources to support them in breaking free from their addiction.



Health Professionals



Train Your Team

Take the American Lung Association's Tobacco Basics, ACT to Address Youth Cessation and Not On Tobacco professional development trainings to best educate and support youth in their tobacco-free journeys.



Help Them Quit

Provide support and treatment, like one of the Lung Association's proven-effective programs to help patients quit using tobacco to lead a healthier life.



Ask Every Patient

Screen all patients for tobacco use at every visit so you can intervene with cessation support and treatment as early as possible.



Advise Parents to Get Involved

Remind parents of the important role they play in helping their kids stay tobacco-free. They should talk to their kids about the dangers of tobacco, pay attention to who they're hanging out with and what they're watching, and teach them how to say no.



Counsel on the Dangers

Educate patients on the negative and irreversible health effects of using tobacco.

Vape Detectors: More Harm Than Help

The American Lung Association does not support vaping detector placement in school restrooms as a strategy for reducing e-cigarette and vaping device use among teens. Like suspension for violations, vaping detector placement is a punitive measure that lacks the educational component necessary to support teens in ending their tobacco dependency for good. Instead, the Lung Association encourages schools and their communities to invest in those public health strategies that are evidence-based and proven-effective in reducing all tobacco product use among teens. This includes implementation of alternatives to suspension programs, such as the American Lung Association's voluntary youth cessation programs, including **INDEPTH**[®], **Not On Tobacco**[®] and **NOT for Me**, along with a comprehensive tobacco-free campus policy.





Resources: Available in English & en Español

Culturally competent American Lung Association e-cigarette and vaping educational and marketing materials can be found here.

For Families

- E-Cig Health Risk Fact Sheet ([English/Spanish](#))
- The Dangers of E-Cigarettes Trifold ([English/Spanish](#))
- E-Cig Parent Fact Sheet ([English/Spanish](#))
- [ACT to Address Youth Cessation](#)
- [TalkAboutVaping.org](#)
- [Do the Vape Talk with Parent Guide](#)
- [Join Freedom From Smoking](#)
- [Get Your Head Out of the Clouds](#)
(collaboration with Ad Council)
- [#DoTheVapeTalk](#) (collaboration with Ad Council)

For Schools and Community Organizations

- [Vape-Free Schools Initiative](#)
- [Vape-Free Schools Initiative Promo Video](#)
- [Vape-Free Schools Initiative Tobacco Policy Assessment and Toolkit](#)

For Health Professionals: Tobacco Treatment Quick Reference Guides

- [Advising on Cessation Medication \(English/Spanish\)](#)
 - [Getting Ready for Your Next Office Visit – Quitting Tobacco Use \(English/Spanish\)](#)
- [Ask-Advise-Refer \(AAR\) \(English/Spanish\)](#)
- [Why It’s Hard to Quit \(English/Spanish\)](#)
- [Stages of Change \(English/Spanish\)](#)
 - [Using Scaling to Assess Readiness to Quit \(English/Spanish\)](#)
- [Motivational Interviewing \(English/Spanish\)](#)
 - [Quit Attempts \(English/Spanish\)](#)
- [Tips to Quit \(English/Spanish\)](#)
- [Building a Tobacco Treatment Plan \(English/Spanish\)](#)
 - [Youth Cessation: Ask-Counsel-Treat \(ACT\) \(English/Spanish\)](#)
 - [Setting goals using the SMART technique](#)

Public Health Road Map: Systems Change Strategies to Address Youth Cessation

This [Quick Reference Guide](#) is intended for State Tobacco Control Program staff and other public health professionals, working with providers, organizations, agencies and systems serving adolescents, to promote strategies that address tobacco cessation. This guide includes information on American Lung Association’s evidence-based programs along with curated partner resources to support this important work.

Professional Development Trainings (Working with Youth)

Beginner: Tobacco Basics

The American Lung Association's Tobacco Basics is a free one-hour online course including five learning modules designed to lay the foundation in understanding the toll of commercial tobacco use in the U.S. In this course, participants will learn the difference between commercial tobacco products, including e-cigarettes and vaping devices; the effects of commercial tobacco use on the human body and brain; nicotine dependence and why quitting is so challenging; proven policies that protect public health from the toll of commercial tobacco; and the programs available to help all commercial tobacco users successfully quit for good.

Intermediate: INDEPTH – Alternative to Suspension Facilitator Training

The American Lung Association's INDEPTH® (Intervention for Nicotine Dependence: Education, Prevention, Tobacco and Health) program is a free on-demand alternative to suspension or citation program that is offered as an option to students who face suspension for violation of school tobacco use policies. This free three-module certification training prepares adults to implement the four-module INDEPTH course for middle and high school students. Upon successful completion of the INDEPTH training, facilitators will receive three-year certification and access the INDEPTH Facilitator Guide and resources to plan and implement the program.

Advanced: Not On Tobacco Facilitator Training

The American Lung Association's Not On Tobacco (N-O-T) Facilitator Training is a four-hour course designed to prepare school and community organizations to implement the N-O-T youth tobacco cessation program delivered in a group-format cessation programming for youth ages 13-19 in a school or community-based setting. Not On Tobacco (N-O-T)® is an evidence-based approach to help middle and high school youth quit or reduce their tobacco use, including e-cigarettes. Upon successful completion, you will receive three-year certification and access the N-O-T Facilitator Guide, Participant Workbook and additional program resources. The cost is \$400 per person for this behavior modification facilitator certification course.

Advanced: Ask-Counsel-Treat (ACT) For Youth Cessation

The American Lung Association's ACT to Address Youth Cessation Training is a free one-hour on-demand, online course that provides an overview for healthcare professionals, school personnel and community members in youth/adolescent supportive roles in conducting a brief intervention for teens who use commercial tobacco. Based on the [American Academy of Pediatrics' Youth Tobacco Cessation: Considerations for Clinicians](#), the session outlines the steps of Ask, Counsel, Treat and provides guidance, support and best practices for effectively delivering ACT as a brief intervention for adolescents who identify as commercial tobacco users, including e-cigarettes.

Advanced: Vape-Free Schools Initiative

If you are an educator committed to helping students navigate the youth vaping crisis, we have programs to help you in your efforts. Participating in the American Lung Association Vape-Free Schools initiative means that your school is a leader in supporting students affected by e-cigarettes, offering clear guidance, education and cessation. Completion of this brief course provides an opportunity to review your school's tobacco-free policy to ensure it is comprehensive.

Teen Intervention and Cessation

- INDEPTH® Materials
 - Stop Vaping with INDEPTH Video ([English](#))
 - INDEPTH One-Pager ([English/Spanish](#))
 - INDEPTH 728x90 Ad ([English/Spanish 1/Spanish 2](#))
 - INDEPTH 300x250 Ad ([English](#))
 - INDEPTH Postcard ([English/Spanish](#))
 - INDEPTH Rack Card ([English/Spanish](#))
- NOT® Materials
 - NOT One-Pager ([English/Spanish](#))
 - NOT Trifold ([English/Spanish](#))
- NOT for Me Materials
 - NOT for Me Postcard ([English/Spanish](#))
 - NOT for Me Rack Card ([English/Spanish](#))
- General
 - Teen Education One-Pager ([English/Spanish](#))
 - Teen Cessation One-Pager ([English/Spanish](#))

General Tobacco Education

The American Lung Association's website is now equipped with a new translation feature making all lung health resource pages available in up to 10 different languages, including Spanish. To activate this feature, simply visit [Lung.org](https://www.lung.org) and click the blue TRANSLATE button at the top right of the screen.

- Tobacco Trends Brief ([English/Spanish](#) – use Translate button)
- State of Tobacco Control Report (SOTC) ([English/Spanish](#) – use Translate button)
- What Is Secondhand Smoke? ([English/Spanish](#))
- Health Benefits of Quitting Smoking ([English/Spanish](#))
- Facts About Hookah ([English/Spanish](#))
- What Is Thirdhand Smoke? ([English/Spanish](#))
- Tobacco Cessation Resources for Teens ([English/Spanish](#))
- Tobacco Education Resources for Teens ([English/Spanish](#))
- Quit Smoking Ad ([English/Spanish](#))
- COVID-19 & Tobacco ([English/Spanish](#))



Empower Your Community Toolkits

The American Lung Association has created a series of guides to help educators, social service providers, healthcare providers, researchers and community-based organizations understand common barriers to quitting tobacco and to strengthen collective approaches to addressing tobacco use in our diverse communities.

- [Addressing Tobacco Use in Black Communities Toolkit](#)
- [Addressing Tobacco Use in Hispanic or Latino Communities Toolkit \(English/Spanish\)](#)
- [Addressing Commercial Tobacco Use in Indigenous Communities Toolkit](#)
- [Addressing Menthol Tobacco Use Toolkit \(coming soon\)](#)
- [Addressing Tobacco Use in LGBT+ Communities Toolkit \(coming soon\)](#)

Addressing E-Cigarettes & Vaping Devices

- [The Impact of E-Cigarettes on the Lung \(English/Spanish\)](#)
- [What You Need to Know About E-Cigarettes – For Parents \(English/Spanish\)](#)
- [What You Need to Know About E-Cigarettes – For Schools \(English/Spanish\)](#)
- [What You Need to Know About E-Cigarettes – For Teens \(English/Spanish\)](#)
- [The Dangers of E-Cigarettes Trifold \(English/Spanish\)](#)
- [The Truth About E-Cigarettes Brochure \(English/Spanish\)](#)
- [What Is Secondhand Aerosol from E-Cigarettes? \(English/Spanish\)](#)
- [Additional E-Cigarette Resources](#)
- [American Lung Association Vape-Free One Pager \(English/Spanish\)](#)

Addressing Menthol and Flavorings

- [What Is Menthol?](#)
- [Menthol Cigarettes – For Parents \(English/Spanish\)](#)
- [Menthol Cigarettes – For Schools \(English/Spanish\)](#)
- [Menthol Cigarettes – For Teens \(English/Spanish\)](#)
- [Cigars & Flavored Cigars – For Parents \(English/Spanish\)](#)
- [Cigars & Flavored Cigars – For Schools \(English/Spanish\)](#)
- [Cigars & Flavored Cigars – For Teens \(English/Spanish\)](#)



Asthma Programs and Initiatives

- The Asthma Friendly Schools Initiative provides a framework and tools that communities and schools can use to work together on a comprehensive approach to asthma management, including planning tools, policy recommendations and education programs.
- The Breathe Well, Live Well® program serves as the Lung Association's Signature Program for adult asthma self-management education that teaches adults to take control of their asthma so they can be active and healthy.
- Kickin' Asthma is a fun and interactive asthma self-management education program for kids ages 11–16. Kickin' Asthma includes different learning techniques suitable for teenage kids and highlights self-management practices, such as recognizing triggers and proper medication use.
- Open Airways for Schools® (OAS) is a program that educates and empowers children ages 8–11 through a fun and interactive approach to asthma self-management. The program teaches children with asthma how to detect the warning signs of asthma, avoid their triggers and make decisions about their health.

Partner Organizations

- **Adult Cessation**
 - [CDC Tips From Former Smokers](#)
- **Family Oriented Resources**
 - [Sesame Street Workshops](#)
 - [Healthy Habits for All Video Loop](#)
 - [Simple Dance and Movement](#)
 - [Book Buddies Story Time](#)
 - [Rosita and Sofia](#)
 - [Big Bird's Comfy-Cozy Nest Story Time](#)



- **E-Cigarettes**
 - [2016 Surgeon General's Report: E-Cigarette Use Among Youth and Young Adults](#)
 - [U.S. Surgeon General's Know the Risks: E-Cigarettes and Young People](#)
 - [Office on Smoking and Health, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion's Facts about Electronic Cigarettes](#)
 - [U.S. Food & Drug Administration's Vaporizers, E-Cigarettes and other Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems \(ENDS\)](#)
 - ["The Real Cost" Youth E-Cigarette Prevention Campaign](#)
 - [My Vaping Mistake | The Real Cost of Vapes](#)
 - [The National Academies of Sciences Engineering Medicine Health and Medicine Division's Public Health Consequences of E-Cigarettes](#)
 - [American Nonsmokers' Rights Foundation Electronic Cigarettes](#)
 - [Public Health Law Center/Tobacco Control Legal Consortium E-Cigarettes](#)
 - [Public Health Law Center's Model for a Tobacco-Free Environment in Minnesota's K-12 Schools](#)
 - [Take Down Tobacco](#)
 - [Stanford's Tobacco Prevention Toolkit](#)
 - [CATCH My Breath E-Cigarette Prevention Program for Schools](#)
 - [Parents Against Vaping e-cigarettes \(PAVe\)](#)
 - [American Academy of Pediatrics E-Cigarette and Vaping Toolkit](#)

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