

Tobacco Use by Youth Is Rising

Tobacco product use among U.S. youth is increasing. More than 1 in 4 high school students and about 1 in 14 middle school students in 2018 had used a tobacco product in the past 30 days. This was a considerable increase from 2017, which was driven by an increase in e-cigarette use. E-cigarette use increased from 11.7% to 20.8% among high school students and from 3.3% to 4.9% among middle school students from 2017 to 2018. No change was found in the use of other tobacco products, including cigarettes, during this time.

There were 1.5 million more current youth e-cigarette users in 2018 than 2017. Four.9 million youth were current tobacco product users in 2018. Use of any tobacco product grew by 38.3% among high school students (2017-2018). E-cigarettes, specifically those shaped like USB flash drives, are the main reason for the increase.

So what parents should know about vaping and JUULing? JUULing is a teen phenomenon. It's a new way to consume—and get the buzz of—nicotine without the mess and telltale signs of smoking a cigarette. This trend can have serious negative side effects for youth. Elaine Johannes, K-State Research and Extension Specialist for Family and Youth Development offers these insights:

- 1. What is a JUUL? A JUUL, pronounced “jewel”, is an e-cigarette that looks like a computer flash drive and charges in a USB outlet. Once powered, you can load the JUUL with tiny, refillable pods of liquid nicotine. One pod contains the same amount of nicotine as a pack of cigarettes. Just one quick “puff” can give youth the “feel good” sensation. A JUUL pod is no bigger than a soda can tab. The e-nicotine comes in appealing flavors such as crème brulee, mango and bubble gum.**
- 2. Why is it so popular? Three words: Marketing and Peer Pressure. These terms are strategically sold with a very young audience in mind. The JUUL is often customized with a “skin” or decal with images of movies, TV shows, and pop stars. So it becomes the “cool” thing to do. Many kids don’t realize that JUUL has addictive nicotine and other chemicals.**
- 3. What are the possible signs that a child is using a JUUL? You may notice a sweet smell. Users will often have dehydration and nosebleeds due to a chemical that retains water molecules in e-nicotine. Also, users can experience a strong aversion to caffeine. Other signs include changing habits in grades or behavior, or disappearing regularly to take a hit.**

