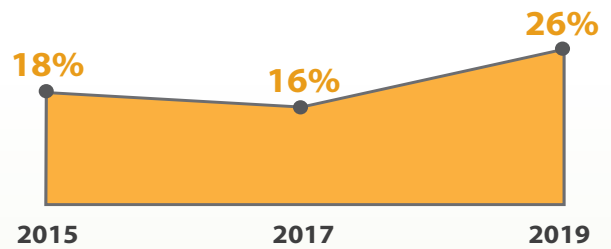


# Tobacco Facts: Alaska teens and e-cigarette use



Current vaping rose significantly among Alaska high school students between 2015 and 2019.<sup>6</sup>



Data Source: Alaska Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) 2015-2019

More Alaska teens are using e-cigarettes than ever before, despite the health risks.

## What are e-cigarettes?

- ⊖ E-cigarettes are also known as e-cigs, vapes, and vape pens.<sup>1</sup> These hand-held devices use battery power to heat a liquid that typically contains nicotine.<sup>1</sup> This produces an aerosol that the user inhales, or 'vapes'.<sup>1</sup>
- ⊖ E-cigarette brands include Puff Bar, Suorin, Smok, JUUL, and others.
- ⊖ The e-cigarette industry is constantly evolving. E-cigarettes have rapidly changed shapes, from vape pens to mods to discreet pod devices. Now easy-to-use disposable products deliver nicotine to young users in new and appealing ways.
  - For more information about different types of e-cigarettes, see our [previous e-cigarette fact sheet](#).<sup>a</sup> More in-depth information about these products is [available from CDC](#).<sup>b</sup>

## What are the dangers?

- ⊖ Most e-cigarettes contain nicotine, which is harmful to the teen brain and can lead to addiction.<sup>2</sup>
- ⊖ E-cigarette marketing uses the same strategies found in conventional cigarette ads. This includes using themes that resonate with young people, such as freedom, sexuality, health, and rebellion.<sup>3</sup> Flavors and lower cost are used to appeal to youth and young adults.<sup>3</sup>
  - Teens are still able to access a variety of flavored vaping products, despite U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) actions to address some flavored e-cigarette products.<sup>4</sup>
- ⊖ Vaping can lead to EVALI, or E-cigarette or Vaping product use-Associated Lung Injury.<sup>5</sup> This causes lung damage and breathing problems. EVALI was a serious concern during fall 2019, when there was a nationwide peak in EVALI-related hospitalization and death.<sup>5</sup> The chances of developing EVALI increase when people vape cannabis products and products containing vitamin E acetate, especially from informal sources like friends, family, or in-person or online dealers.<sup>5</sup>

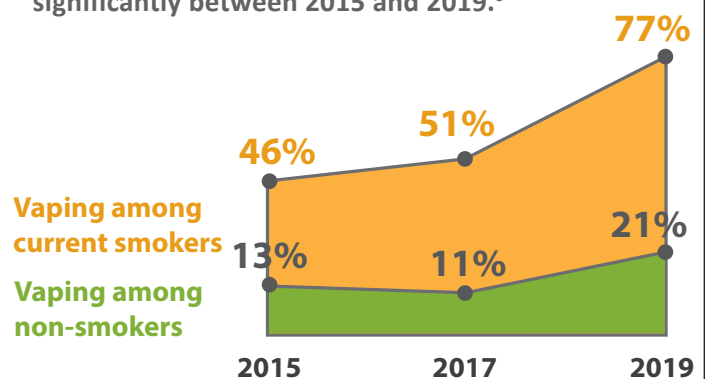
<sup>a</sup> See Tobacco Facts: E-cigarette & vapor product use among Alaska youth, February 2020. [http://dhss.alaska.gov/dph/Chronic/Documents/Tobacco/factsheets/Factsheet\\_E-cigaretteVapeUseAK.pdf](http://dhss.alaska.gov/dph/Chronic/Documents/Tobacco/factsheets/Factsheet_E-cigaretteVapeUseAK.pdf)

<sup>b</sup> See CDC's E-cigarette, or Vaping, Products Visual Dictionary. [https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/basic\\_information/e-cigarettes/pdfs/ecigarette-or-vaping-products-visual-dictionary-508.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/basic_information/e-cigarettes/pdfs/ecigarette-or-vaping-products-visual-dictionary-508.pdf)

## E-cigarette use among Alaska teens

- ⊖ Note that the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) questions about e-cigarette use specifically included JUUL for the first time in 2019.<sup>7</sup> The recent increase in e-cigarette use in Alaska corresponds with an increase in the popularity of JUUL products during that time, and parallels an increase in teen vaping in the United States overall.<sup>8</sup>
- ⊖ Between 2015 and 2019, the following groups of Alaska high school students saw significant increases in current e-cigarette use:<sup>6</sup>
  - Alaska Native students
  - White students
  - Males and females
  - Current smokers
  - Non-smokers
- ⊖ In 2019, there was no significant difference in current vaping between teens of different races, between males and females, or between grade levels.<sup>6</sup>
- ⊖ In 2019, high school students who perceived e-cigarettes as harmful were less likely to vape than their peers who saw e-cigarette use as slightly or not at all harmful.<sup>6</sup>

Alaska high school students who currently smoke cigarettes are more likely to vape.<sup>6</sup> Current vaping among both smokers and non-smokers rose significantly between 2015 and 2019.<sup>6</sup>



Data Source: Alaska Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) 2015-2019

## What can we do?

### Policy Makers, Parents, and Schools:



#### Support strategies that work to reduce e-cigarette use, including:

- Support policies that increase the sales price of tobacco products.<sup>9</sup>
  - “Increasing the price of tobacco products is the single most effective way to prevent initiation among nonsmokers and to reduce consumption,” according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).<sup>9</sup>
  - Increase the minimum legal sales price of tobacco products.<sup>9</sup>
  - Restrict promotions and discounts on tobacco products.
- Restrict youth and young adult access to tobacco products.<sup>9</sup>
  - Ensure that tobacco policies include e-cigarettes, heat-not-burn products, and all other tobacco products.
  - Support the same policy at local, state, and federal levels to allow coordination of enforcement efforts across agencies.
- Promote local restrictions and policies that reduce youth access to tobacco products.
  - This could include flavor restrictions, as flavored e-cigarette products are popular among youth.<sup>4</sup>
    - The FDA recently announced that it is enforcing restrictions on e-cigarette companies, with a particular focus on companies that market products to youth.<sup>4</sup> This is not considered a federal flavor ban.<sup>4,10</sup>
  - As the context of tobacco use changes, it is important to update policies to include new tobacco products and address current use trends.
- Partner with K-12 schools on tobacco-free policies.<sup>9</sup>
  - This can include working with schools to use educational alternatives to suspension as a form of discipline for students who disregard school e-cigarette policies.<sup>11</sup>



## Tobacco Facts: Alaska teens and e-cigarette use

### Vaping among Alaska high school students is on the rise<sup>6</sup>



Data Source: Alaska Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) 2015-2019

### Helpful Resources:



- CDC e-cigarette webpage [www.cdc.gov/tobacco/basic\\_information/e-cigarettes/](http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/basic_information/e-cigarettes/)
- Tobacco-Free Alaska: [www.tobaccofree.alaska.gov](http://www.tobaccofree.alaska.gov)
- Alaska Tobacco Prevention and Control Program: [www.dhss.alaska.gov/dph/Chronic/Pages/Tobacco/](http://www.dhss.alaska.gov/dph/Chronic/Pages/Tobacco/)

### References

- 1 CDC, Nov 8 2019. *About Electronic Cigarettes (E-Cigarettes)*. [https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/basic\\_information/e-cigarettes/about-e-cigarettes.html](https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/basic_information/e-cigarettes/about-e-cigarettes.html).
- 2 US DHHS, 2018. *U.S. Surgeon General's Advisory on E-cigarette Use Among Youth*. U.S. Surgeon General's Advisory on E-cigarette Use Among Youth. <https://e-cigarettes.surgeongeneral.gov/documents/surgeon-generals-advisory-on-e-cigarette-use-among-youth-2018.pdf>.
- 3 U.S. DHHS, 2016. *E-Cigarette Use Among Youth and Young Adults. A Report of the Surgeon General*. [https://e-cigarettes.surgeongeneral.gov/documents/2016\\_sgr\\_full\\_report\\_non-508.pdf](https://e-cigarettes.surgeongeneral.gov/documents/2016_sgr_full_report_non-508.pdf).
- 4 FDA, 2020. Enforcement Priorities for Electronic Nicotine Delivery System (ENDS) and Other Deemed Products on the Market Without Premarket Authorization (Revised). <https://www.fda.gov/media/133880/download>
- 5 CDC, 2020. Outbreak of Lung Injury Associated with the Use of E-Cigarette, or Vaping, Products. [https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/basic\\_information/e-cigarettes/severe-lung-disease.html](https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/basic_information/e-cigarettes/severe-lung-disease.html).
- 6 Alaska Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) data, 2015-2019.
- 7 YRBS, 2019. 2019 Alaska YRBS Questionnaire. <http://dhss.alaska.gov/dph/Chronic/Documents/yrbs/2019AKHQuestionnaire.pdf>
- 8 Gentzke AS, et al, 2019. *Vital Signs: Tobacco Product Use Among Middle and High School Students* —MMWR. <http://dx.doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.mm6806e1>.
- 9 CDC, 2014. *Best Practices for Comprehensive Tobacco Control Programs*. [https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/stateandcommunity/best\\_practices/pdfs/2014/comprehensive.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/stateandcommunity/best_practices/pdfs/2014/comprehensive.pdf)
- 10 FDA, 2020. FDA finalizes enforcement policy on unauthorized flavored cartridge-based e-cigarettes that appeal to children, including fruit and mint. <https://www.fda.gov/news-events/press-announcements/fda-finalizes-enforcement-policy-unauthorized-flavored-cartridge-based-e-cigarettes-appeal-children>.
- 11 Public Health Law Center, 2019. Student Commercial Tobacco Use in Schools Alternative Measures. <https://www.publichealthlawcenter.org/sites/default/files/resources/Addressing-Student-Commercial-Tobacco-Use-in-Schools-Alternative-Measures-2019-0.pdf>

Publication date: August 2020