



WHAT'S NEXT? WHY WE CAN'T RELAX ON YOUTH VAPING.

While New Hampshire has seen positive trends in reducing youth tobacco use, the concerning reality remains: 21% of 12th graders vape, 11% using frequently, and over half of those have tried to quit in the last 12 months.¹ This demonstrates the impact of nicotine addiction and industry targeting. To protect the progress made and ensure our youth's continued well-being, sustained focus and investment in prevention and intervention efforts are essential. The addictive properties of nicotine, heavy marketing targeting young people, and easy access to vaping products, have resulted in a new generation of consumers for the tobacco and nicotine industry.

By 12th grade, **21%** of NH students report using a vape product with **11%** reporting frequent use.
Of those students, **51%** have tried to quit in the last year.

While the rates have come down from a recent high of 43% of 12th graders using e-cigarettes in 2019, they are still concerning. We need to stay focused on proven prevention strategies. The following list highlights the need for focused attention and investment.

Industry influence	The tobacco industry invests heavily in marketing, reaching young people with appealing products. It is estimated that the tobacco industry spends \$96 million dollars annually in New Hampshire alone, and \$8.6 billion nationwide, on marketing tobacco products. ² Misleading marketing incorrectly asserts that these products are safe. Success in reducing smoking and nicotine use among young people is a direct result of public health prevention efforts.
Evolving and emerging products	New products like nicotine pouches and disposable vapes present unique challenges due to their discreet nature and high nicotine content with high-nicotine products like nicotine pouches, flavored gums, bright colors and disposable e-cigarettes.
Use of new products	Nicotine use in any form is unsafe for youth. Nicotine pouches (Zyn, On! And Velo) and vapes contain high levels of nicotine, making addiction more likely and quitting more challenging. Pouches (and even e-cigarettes) can also be used more frequently and more discreetly than traditional cigarettes, which translates to more frequent use and a higher risk of addiction.
Health harms	The health harms of nicotine to children are serious, and impact the heart, lungs, brain, and dental health. E-cigarettes can cause lung disease, worsen asthma, damage cardiac cells, worsen depression and anxiety, and harm brain development. The long-term health effects of these high oral nicotine products and vapes are not yet known.
Childhood brain development	The brain continues developing until about age 25, making childhood and adolescence critical periods for brain development. Exposure to highly addictive nicotine during this time has lasting impacts on the brain. Vaping in youth is associated with ADHD, cognitive deficits, and later addiction. More than 80% of adult smokers started before they were 18 years old. Youth vaping is a challenging health issue facing schools in New Hampshire. Youth use can disrupt learning and divert resources away from education.
Mental health	Contrary to marketing efforts, the use of nicotine negatively impacts young people's mood and memory. Nicotine use can increase feelings of stress, anxiety and depression. These feelings, along with withdrawal symptoms, can make it difficult to focus in school.
Use of multiple products	About 30% of youth who report current tobacco use report using more than one type of product like cigarettes, vapes or nicotine pouches. Again, making addiction more likely.
Healthcare costs	Annual New Hampshire healthcare costs directly caused by smoking are estimated at \$847 million dollars. Medicaid costs caused by smoking are \$149.7 million.

1. <https://wisdom.dhhs.nh.gov/wisdom/topics.html?topic=tobacco-use>
2. https://www.tobaccofreekids.org/problem/toll-us/new_hampshire
3. https://www.tobaccofreekids.org/problem/toll-us/new_hampshire



PREVENTION WORKS:

Public health efforts have shown positive results, demonstrating that targeted interventions can make a difference. Without strong and ongoing efforts to protect young people, that impact will be reversed among new children in New Hampshire exposed to tobacco products and marketing every day.

Whether you are an educator, advocate, parent or provider, when we work together, we can build a healthy future by:

Delaying Use as a Strategy: Supporting youth to delay substance use allows for optimal brain development and reduces the risk of addiction. We can all do our part to support healthy youth development by reducing easy access to substances in the community or home, restricting the presence of advertisements in various forms especially around schools, and fighting the normalization of substance use in our everyday activities.⁴

Community Collaboration: Working together—caregivers, educators, and community members—create a supportive environment that promotes healthy choices.

Education and Awareness: Providing young people with accurate information empowers them to make healthy choices and resist harmful influences.

Policy and Access: Implementing policies that restrict access to nicotine products and regulate marketing protects young people from harmful influences.

Youth Involvement: Engaging young people in prevention efforts ensures that solutions are relevant and effective.

4. McCausland, K., Booth, S., Leaversuch, F., Freeman, B., Wolf, K., Leaver, T., & Jancey, J. (2024). Socio-ecological factors that influence youth vaping: perspectives from Western Australian school professionals, parents and young people. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies on Health and Well-Being*, 19(1). <https://doi.org/10.1080/17482631.2024.2322753>