Department of Public Health
CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

PHILADELPHIA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

Youth Vaping Resource Guide

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Prepared by

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SmokeFreePhilly.org

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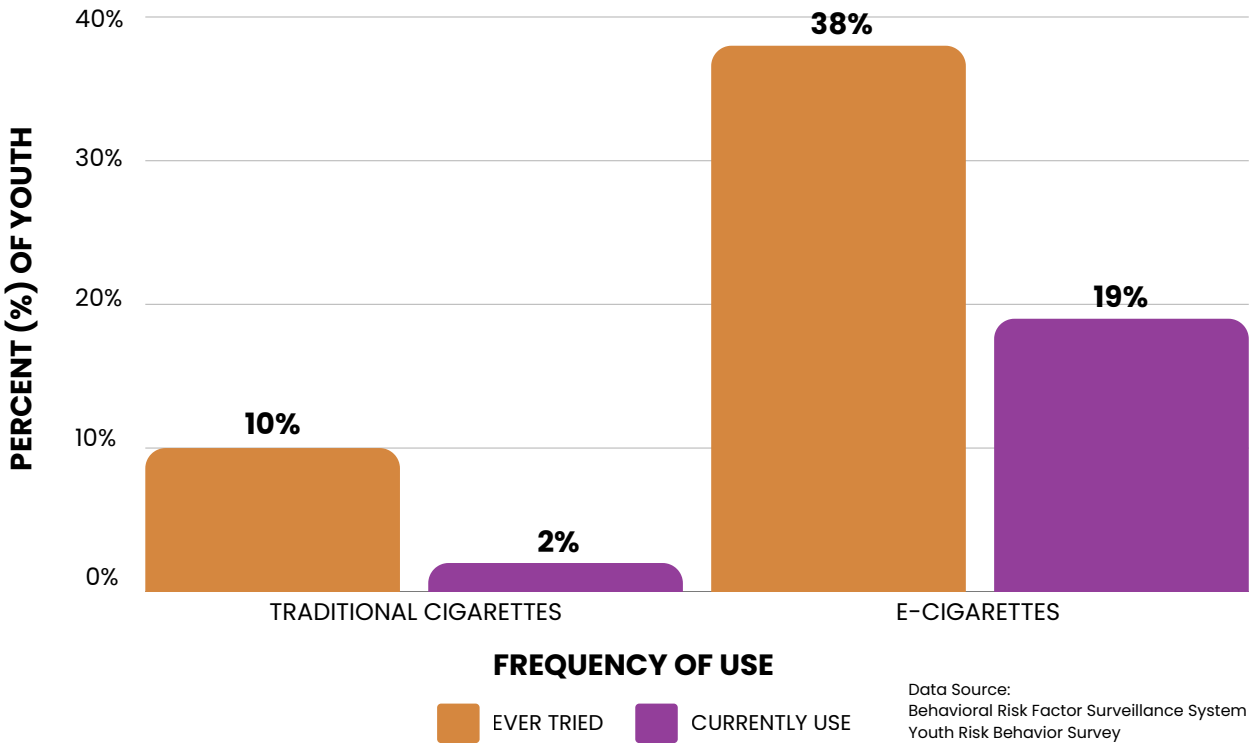
BACKGROUND

Despite reductions in overall tobacco use, youth still use tobacco products, including e-cigarettes or vapes, at high rates. In Philadelphia, high school students are more likely to experiment with vapes than with traditional cigarettes. The rise of vaping devices has significantly contributed to youth tobacco use in Philadelphia: in 2023, 38% of youth reported trying e-cigarettes at least once and 19% report currently using e-cigarettes.

Traditional & Electronic Cigarette Use Among Youth

Philadelphia, 2023



Data Source:
Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System
Youth Risk Behavior Survey

This guide serves as a practical resource, offering strategies for prevention, screening, and intervention. It is designed for professionals who work with youth, young people seeking support in becoming tobacco- and vape-free, and parents who want to effectively communicate with their children about the risks associated with vaping.

E-CIGARETTES, VAPING & YOUTH HEALTH

E-cigs and other vaping devices come in various forms. They produce a vapor made of nicotine, flavorings, and other chemicals. Some of these devices are easy to conceal, share and sell-even in school settings-and can be the size and shape of a flash drive, but contain as much nicotine as a pack of cigarettes.

Vaping Risks

Multiple studies show that youth who vape are much more likely to go on to smoke regular cigarettes.

Brain Development

Children and teens are at higher risk of nicotine addition than adults because their brains are still developing.

False Claims

Some devices claim to be "nicotine-free" but still contain nicotine.

Philadelphia Tobacco Use

Total tobacco use, including e-cigs, cigarettes and cigars has actually risen in Philadelphia in recent years, after many years of decline. More than 1 in 4 teens in Philadelphia uses some form of tobacco.

Big Tobacco

Big tobacco companies, who have a long record of targeting our children, have been investing in e-cigarette companies and heavily promoting these products to youth.

REPORTING TOBACCO SALES VIOLATIONS

There are several ways a retailer can be in violation of Philadelphia tobacco sales laws:

- Not checking ID
- Not posting an age warning sign
- Selling tobacco without a current tobacco retailer permit
- Selling tobacco products, electronic smoking devices, or accessories to a minor under 21 years of age
- Selling "loosies" or out-of-package cigarettes/cigars without a UPC not meant for individual sale

To report sales violations, call or text "SALES" to 1-888-99-SMOKE (76653) or visit Smoke Free Philly to report violations online.

PREVENTION

Prevention resources focus on educating youth, raising awareness about the risks of tobacco, and implementing strategies to stop them from initiating tobacco use in the first place.

FOR STUDENTS

Advocacy Institute (Ai)

Ai empowers Philadelphia youth to drive sustainable changes in their communities though media, policy, and advocacy-focused programming:

#RealTalkTobacco (#RTT):

AGE: 7TH - 12TH GRADE *COST: FREE (SPACE IS LIMITED)*

This program is a 10-week, evidence-informed leadership, advocacy, and prevention experience for Philadelphia youth ages 13–19. Participants learn how tobacco and vaping affect people and neighborhoods that are often targeted by the tobacco industry. They build advocacy and communication skills and work together to create a call to action that addresses tobacco-related issues in their schools and communities. Youth in the program are paid for their participation. They also receive health education and develop leadership skills through hands-on activities, teamwork, and conversations with local leaders. After finishing the program, participants can join the Advocacy Institute Alumni Network, where they continue growing as leaders and access new opportunities for advocacy, service, and paid roles.

#RealTalk: The Truth About Vaping (#RTV):

AGE: 5TH - 12TH GRADE *COST: FREE*

This 45-minute educational presentation is designed for middle and high school students. It offers engaging, age-appropriate information on the health risks of commercial e-cigarette products and the dangers of unregulated, black-market vapes sold by unlicensed retailers. Interactive activities are included to support student learning and information retention. To request more information about hosting a presentation, complete the form here.

To apply or learn more, email: advocacyinstitute@phmc.org

Advocacy Institute continued...

Tobacco Resistance Unit (TRU)

AGE: 7TH - 12TH GRADE *COST: FREE*

Advocacy Institute leads Philadelphia's chapter of TRU, a statewide movement of young people committed to living tobacco-free. Youth can join TRU to connect with other advocates, access free toolkits, plan anti-tobacco projects at their schools, and even apply to become a TRU Ambassador. Students are encouraged to sign up to join their local TRU Group here.

Truth Initiative's Vaping: Know the Truth

AGE RANGE: 8TH - 12TH GRADE *COST: FREE*

This self-led, interactive, digital course educates students about the risks associated with using vapes. It includes six course topics and takes between 30 – 40 minutes to complete. Students can access the course overview here and sign up for the program here.

Food and Drug Administration's Vaping Prevention & Education

AGE RANGE: TEENS *COST: FREE*

This digital resource includes articles and videos about the risks of vaping, the opportunity to develop a research project to assess peer vaping knowledge, and the opportunity to analyze tobacco advertisements to understand how vapes are marketed to teens. Students can take a quiz to determine whether they need help quitting.

FOR SCHOOL STAFF

Coordinated Approach to Child Health: CATCH My Breath

AGE RANGE: 5TH - 12TH GRADE *COST: RANGE*

This evidence-based vaping prevention program focuses on empowering students to make informed decisions about vaping. It includes grade-specific classroom curricula, information on youth vaping prevalence, laws, policies, and interdisciplinary program supplements.

Cost:

- Free training
  - 45-minute, asynchronous, pre-recorded training; participants who complete this course will be trained to implement the CATCH My Breath program in their schools and communities.
- $99/school video lessons (add on)
  - Video lessons can be taught in synchronous or asynchronous environments; includes on-screen slides, activity prompts, and worksheets.
- $99/person live, interactive training
  - 2-hour, live training; participants who complete this training will be trained to implement CATCH My Breath in their schools and communities.
- $425/person train-the-trainer training
  - 2-day, 3-hour per session live training; participants who complete this training and pass the open-book exam will be certified to facilitate the CATCH My Breath training.

Stanford Medicine's REACH Lab: Tobacco Prevention Toolkit

AGE RANGE: ELEMENTARY - HIGH SCHOOL *COST: FREE*

The Philadelphia School District has adopted this resource as supplemental material to support its students. It includes You and Me, Together Vape Free, a vape-specific education curriculum, infographics, flyers, and fact sheets, and an alternative-to-suspension program.

Additional tobacco-related curricula include:

- Healthy Habits, Healthy Planet
- The PRIDE Curriculum
- What's Menthol Got to Do With It?
- Un-PACK-ing Cigarettes
- Let's Be Smokeless: Tobacco Free
- Hookah TellMe?

FOR SCHOOL STAFF CONTINUED

Food and Drug Administration's Vaping Prevention & Education

AGE RANGE: TEENS *COST: FREE*

This digital resource includes tips for educating students about the risks associated with vaping, lesson plans, classroom materials, and an opportunity to contribute to research on youth nicotine products by answering a survey about products confiscated at school.

FOR PARENTS

American Lung Association's Talk About Vaping

AGE RANGE: SCHOOL-AGED YOUTH *COST: FREE*

This guide, developed in partnership with child psychologists, includes strategies for having the most effective conversation about vaping with adolescents before you talk, while you're talking, and after you talk. It also includes information on the basics of vaping, its dangers, and the youth vaping epidemic.

Food and Drug Administration's Vaping Prevention & Education

AGE RANGE: TEENS *COST: FREE*

This digital resource includes tips on talking with teens about the risks associated with vaping and information on safely disposing of vapes.

SCREENING

Screening resources are designed to identify whether youth are using tobacco products and to evaluate the extent and severity of their nicotine use, providing a foundation for appropriate intervention.

The American Academy of Pediatrics advises that clinicians working with youth begin screening for tobacco use at age 11. Pediatric health visits offer a valuable chance to intervene and help prevent both the initiation and long-term use of tobacco.

The Ask-Counsel-Treat (ACT) model reduces the time and burden on pediatric health providers while increasing the likelihood of successful tobacco cessation among youth.

A.C.T. TO ADDRESS YOUTH CESSATION		
ASK	**COUNSEL**	**TREAT**
Screen for tobacco use with all youth, during every clinical encounter.	Advise all youth who use tobacco to quit and have them set a quit date within two weeks.	Link youth to behavioral treatment extenders and prescribe pharmacologic support when indicated. After the visit, follow-up to assess progress and offer support.

The American Academy of Pediatrics developed a flowchart to guide clinicians in using the ACT model during patient visits and an in-depth guide to address tobacco use among youth.

There are several screeners available to assess tobacco use in youth:

- Hooked on Nicotine Checklist (HONC)
  - Focuses solely on tobacco use
- Screening to Brief Intervention (S2BI)
  - Includes screening questions for tobacco, alcohol, cannabis, and other substance use
- CRAFFT 2.1+N
  - Includes screening questions for alcohol, cannabis, and other substance use
  - Includes HONC screener for tobacco use

INTERVENTIONS

Intervention resources provide youth who are using tobacco with cessation tools and programs and behavioral support to help them successfully quit and maintain a tobacco-free lifestyle.

PROGRAMMATIC

American Lung Association's Vape-Free School Initiative includes programs to equip educators with the knowledge and skills to effectively address youth vaping in their schools and communities:

Intervention for Nicotine Dependence: Education, Prevention, Tobacco and Health (INDEPTH)

AGE: TEENS *COST: FREE FACILITATOR TRAINING*

This program provides an interactive alternative to suspension and other punitive responses to tobacco use. Any adult can become an INDEPTH facilitator by completing a one-hour training course. Upon completion, facilitators receive an implementation guide to help establish and run the INDEPTH program within their school or youth-serving organization. Access the program outline here and register for the program here.

Not on Tobacco (N-O-T) Program

AGE RANGE: TEENS *COST: $400 FACILITATOR TRAINING*

Grounded in Social Cognitive Theory, this program is designed for individuals who have completed INDEPTH facilitator training. It takes a holistic, teen-centered approach, addressing topics that are meaningful and relevant to adolescents. To enhance the impact of INDEPTH, it is recommended that school and youth-serving organization staff also train as N-O-T facilitators. Register for the program here.

PROGRAMMATIC CONTINUED

ACT to Address Youth Cessation

AGE RANGE: TEENS *COST: FREE*

This one-hour on-demand course is designed for health care professionals, educators, and community members in youth-serving roles. It offers an overview to conducting brief interventions for teens who use tobacco, including vaping products. The training covers best practices, practical guidance, and support for using the Ask-Counsel-Treat model to effectively engage adolescents in conversations about tobacco use. Register for the course here.

CLINICAL

Nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) allows users to keep a steady stream of nicotine in their bloodstream throughout the day and helps reduce nicotine cravings. NRT comes in the form of gum, patches, lozenges, and nasal spray.

American Academy of Pediatrics

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends providers consider nicotine replacement therapy for youth who are moderately or severely addicted to nicotine. Youth under the age of 18 need a prescription from a health care provider for access to NRT. For further guidance on administering NRT to youth, see Nicotine Replacement Therapy and Adolescent Patients: Information for Pediatricians from the San Luis Obispo County Public Health Department.

Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP)

The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP) is accredited under the Smoking Treatment Accreditation and Recognition (STAR) program. This program offers tailored support to help all household members quit using tobacco.

BEHAVIORAL SUPPORT

National Jewish Health's My Life My Quit

AGE RANGE: TEENS *COST: FREE*

This resource allows users to create a plan to quit, chat with quit coaches, track progress, and earn badges by achieving goals. It includes information on vaping and brain health, vaping and tobacco, and vaping safety. Youth in Pennsylvania can sign up for the program here or text "Start My Quit" to 36072.

National Institutes of Health and National Cancer Institute's Smokefree Teen

AGE: TEENS *COST: FREE*

Teens who access this resource can build their own quit plans, receive support via text, download the quitSTART app, and read additional information about the risks of vaping, tips for quitting, understanding triggers, and dealing with cravings.

Truth Initiative's EX Program

AGE RANGE: TEENS *COST: FREE*

A component of Truth Initiative's Vaping: Know the Truth, this resource offers daily texts with tips and resources to stay nicotine-free and information on health conditions and vaping, stress management tips, challenges that affect quitting, and NRT and prescription medications. Joining the program grants access to a community that is free, anonymous, and accessible 24/7. Youth can sign up for the program here or text DITCHNIC to 88709.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

YOUTH

- Quit-Vaping Action Plan
- Quitting Smoking/Vaping
- Take Down Tobacco National Day of Action

EDUCATORS

- Philadelphia School District's Office of Prevention & Intervention
- Empower Vape-Free Youth Campaign
- Schools Supporting Students to Quit Tobacco Use
- Conversation Card for Educators
- Guides to E-Cigarettes and Vapes Presentations

PARENTS

- How to Talk About Vaping
- Fact Sheet for Parents

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON VAPES

- Vaping Lingo Dictionary
- Emerging Tobacco Products
- The Rise of Products Using Synthetic Nicotine
- Where Do Youth Get Their E-Cigarettes?
- Youth Access and Exposure to E-Cigarettes at the Point of Sale

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION AND SUPPORT, CONTACT:

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