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SAFE Glen Cove Coalition: The Truth- Are Kids Using Nicotine in the Classroom? What Parents and Educators Should Look for and How to Talk About Risks

According to The Truth Initiative, Federal data show that 1.44 million middle and high school students currently vape nicotine. While disposable e-cigarettes remain the most popular nicotine product among students, oral nicotine pouches and cannabis products also raise concerns. Many of these products, especially oral nicotine pouches and disposable vapes, are discreet and easily concealed, so it's important that parents and educators know what to look for and how to talk to students who use nicotine.

Look out for: Oral nicotine pouches/What is a Zyn?

Oral nicotine pouches, such as market leader Zyn, are a new and rapidly expanding category of nicotine products. These small, white pouches filled with nicotine powder and flavors can be placed discreetly between the top lip and gum. Due to their placement, they are sometimes called a "lip pillow" or "upper decky."

Zyn is currently the brand with the largest market share, followed by On! and Rogue pouches. Like many youth-appealing e-cigarettes, oral nicotine pouches come in a variety of flavors including fruit, mint, coffee, cinnamon, and more. They also come in a variety of nicotine strengths, with some containing high concentrations of nicotine.

As of 2025, youth use of oral nicotine pouches is relatively low, with less than 2% of middle and high school students reporting current use of pouches. Regardless, the discreet nature of the pouches (they are difficult to detect once inserted into the mouth) and their sweet and fruity flavors have raised concerns about the potential for youth appeal.

Look out for: "Smart" vapes that resemble gaming devices

Touch screen vape

In the newest trend among disposable e-cigarettes, manufacturers are now adding high-tech elements such as Bluetooth capability, high-definition screens, and speakers to their e-cigarette products, with some versions including games similar to Pac-Man and Tetris.

Some of these products, such as the Craftbox V-Play 20k disposable vape, feature video game controls that make the e-cigarette look like a handheld gaming device. Other brands include wireless speakers that users can pair with their phones, and some even light up while music is playing. Many of these products are sold for \$20 or less, making them affordable for cost-conscious young people.

Student Support: How to talk to students about nicotine use

The best way to address youth nicotine use in the classroom is to help students quit.

If you discover a student using nicotine, it's best to respond with support, not punishment. Students who violate tobacco policies should be approached in a supportive way that focuses on encouraging them to quit. Suspending students can cause even more problems at school and beyond, leading to lower test scores and graduation rates, among other poor outcomes.

Share a smarter way to quit nicotine with EX Program

EX Program by Truth Initiative is a free, evidence-based digital quit program that can increase the odds of quitting with personalized quit plans, interactive text messages, expert resources, and a closely monitored online support community.

An evaluation of EX Program found that enrolled teens were 35% more likely to report not using nicotine after the seven-month study period.

EX Program has also been shown to be effective at helping young people reduce cannabis use.

Bring a free nicotine prevention curriculum to your classroom

It's important to introduce all students to vaping prevention and quit resources. To help schools address youth nicotine use, Truth Initiative offers a national youth vaping prevention curriculum called *Vaping: Know the truth*.

The free, self-guided curriculum offers a modern approach to guide students through the dangers associated with nicotine use, giving them the facts about smoking, vaping, oral nicotine pouches, hookah, and cannabis. The entire curriculum can be accessed online at no cost through EVERFI, a leader in social impact learning.

SAFE, Inc. is the only alcohol and substance abuse prevention, intervention, and education agency in the City of Glen Cove. Its Coalition is concerned with all combustible and electronic products with tobacco. The Agency employs environmental strategies to educate and update the community regarding the negative consequences of smoking and vaping in collaboration with the Tobacco Action Coalition of Long Island. To learn more about the SAFE Glen Cove Coalition please follow www.facebook.com/safeglencovecoalition or to learn more about electronic products visit the Youth and Tobacco Use and Vaping Facts and Myths Pages of SAFE's website to learn more about how vaping is detrimental to your health at www.safeglencove.org.

The Truth Initiative is the nation's largest nonprofit public health organization dedicated to preventing youth and young adult nicotine addiction and empowering quitting. Research is conducted through the Truth Initiative Schroeder Institute that produces independent research to provide evidence for policy change and leadership in cessation research. For more information, please visit www.truthinitiative.org