



A CUP OF HEALTH WITH CDC

Youth and Tobacco

Tobacco Product Use Among Middle and High School Students—United States, 2011-2017

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[Announcer] This program is presented by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

[Dr. Kathleen Dooling] Welcome to *A Cup of Health with CDC*, a weekly feature of the *MMWR*, the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report. I'm your host, Dr. Kathleen Dooling.

Tobacco use is the leading cause of preventable disease and death in the United States. Nearly all tobacco use begins during adolescence.

Dr. Teresa Wang is with CDC's Office on Smoking and Health. She's joining us today to discuss the importance of preventing tobacco use early in life. Welcome to the show, Teresa.

[Dr. Wang] Thanks for having me.

[Dr. Dooling] Teresa, how common is tobacco use among young people?

[Dr. Wang] In recent years, fewer U.S. middle and high school students are using tobacco products, but millions still do. In 2017, 3.6 million middle and high school students said they used a tobacco product in the past 30 days. That's nearly one in five high school students, and one in 18 middle school students.

[Dr. Dooling] At what age is a person most likely to begin using tobacco?

[Dr. Wang] Nearly all tobacco use begins during youth and young adulthood. About nine out of ten cigarette smokers first try smoking by the age of 18.

[Dr. Dooling] What are the most popular types of tobacco products among adolescents?

[Dr. Wang] Since 2014, e-cigarettes have been the most popular type of tobacco product among middle and high school students, followed by cigarettes, cigars, smokeless tobacco, and hookah or water pipe.

[Dr. Dooling] What are the particular dangers of tobacco use among young people?

[Dr. Wang] Tobacco products, including most e-cigarettes, contain nicotine. Nicotine is highly addictive and can harm adolescent brain development, which occurs well into a person's mid-twenties.

[Dr. Dooling] What can parents or others who influence youth do to discourage young people from using tobacco?

[Dr. Wang] They can set a positive example by being tobacco free and talk to youth about the risks of all forms of tobacco product use, including e-cigarettes.

[Dr. Dooling] Where can listeners get more information about preventing tobacco-use among youth?

[Dr. Wang] Listeners can visit [CDC.gov/tobacco](https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco) for more information.

[Dr. Dooling] Thanks, Teresa. I've been talking today with Dr. Teresa Wang about the importance of preventing tobacco use early in life. It's important for parents, teachers, and others who influence young people to emphasize the dangers of tobacco use and discourage them from using *any* form, including e-cigarettes. Preventing tobacco use early in life decreases the chances a person will suffer from tobacco-related disease as an adult.

Until next time, be well. This is Dr. Kathleen Dooling for *A Cup of Health with CDC*.

[Announcer] For the most accurate health information, visit [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov) or call 1-800-CDC-INFO.