



# Protecting Missouri Youth: Tobacco/Nicotine Addiction

## WHY IS NICOTINE UNSAFE FOR YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS?

Nicotine is harmful to developing brains and its use during adolescence can disrupt the formation of brain circuits that control attention, learning, and susceptibility to addiction.

Research has shown early age of smoking and pleasurable initial experiences are correlated with daily use and lifetime nicotine dependence.

Source: <https://truthinitiative.org>



## HOW YOUTH OBTAIN TOBACCO/NICOTINE PRODUCTS

According to the 2024 Missouri Student Survey, among 6th-12th graders, 40.9% of participants reported that it was 'easy' or 'sort of easy' to get e-cigarettes and 30.3% reported that it was 'easy' or 'sort of easy' to get cigarettes.

Research shows that kids often turn to older friends and classmates as sources of tobacco. Therefore, increasing the age of purchase would reduce the likelihood that a high school student will be able to legally purchase tobacco products for other students and underage friends.

Source: [tobaccofreekids.org](https://tobaccofreekids.org)



## RISK OF NICOTINE ADDICTION

Nearly 9 out of 10 adults who smoke cigarettes daily first try smoking by age 18, and 99% first try smoking by age 26.

Each day in the U.S., about 1,600 youth smoke their first cigarette and nearly 200 youth start smoking every day.

Source: [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov)



## THE COST OF TOBACCO

Missouri spends \$3.04 billion per year in annual health care costs directly caused by smoking.

Missouri spends \$644.3 million in tobacco related Medicaid costs alone.

The undue tax burden of tobacco is \$848/household annually for smoking caused government expenditures.

Source:

<https://truthinitiative.org/research-resources/smoking-region/tobacco-use-missouri-2021>  
ETU MO Initiative

## CONTACT US



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### Additional Talking Points

#### THE COST OF TOBACCO

The undue tax burden of tobacco is \$848/household annually for smoking caused government expenditures  
(source: ETU MO Initiative)

#### SMOKING/VAPING PREVELANCE

National data shows that about 95 percent of adult smokers begin smoking before they turn 21. The ages of 18 to 21 are also a critical period when many smokers move from experimental smoking to regular, daily use. While less than half of adult smokers (46 percent) become daily smokers before age 18, four out of five do so before they turn 21. (source: Tobaccofreekids.org)

Missouri is 12th in the nation for youth e-cigarette use.

There are 6 stores that sell tobacco for every 1 store that sells fresh fruits and vegetables in Missouri.

#### INCREASING THE LEGAL AGE FOR PURCHASING TOBACCO CAN SAVE LIVES

In March 2015, a report from the National Academy of Medicine revealed that "Tobacco 21" could prevent 223,000 deaths among people born between 2000 and 2019, including reducing lung cancer deaths by 50,000.

Youth are gaining access to vaping products through the blackmarket where some are laced with fentanyl.

#### RETAILER COMPLIANCE

In 2022, 1 in 5 Missouri tobacco retailers that were checked by the FDA sold tobacco to an underage youth.

There are tobacco retailers that have not been checked for compliance over the past 12 years.

Tobacco retailer compliance with the sales age law is higher in Missouri communities that have a legal purchasing age of 21.