

**PHILADELPHIA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH**

# Youth Vaping Resource Guide

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**Prepared by**

Division of Chronic Disease & Injury Prevention  
[SmokeFreePhilly.org](http://SmokeFreePhilly.org)



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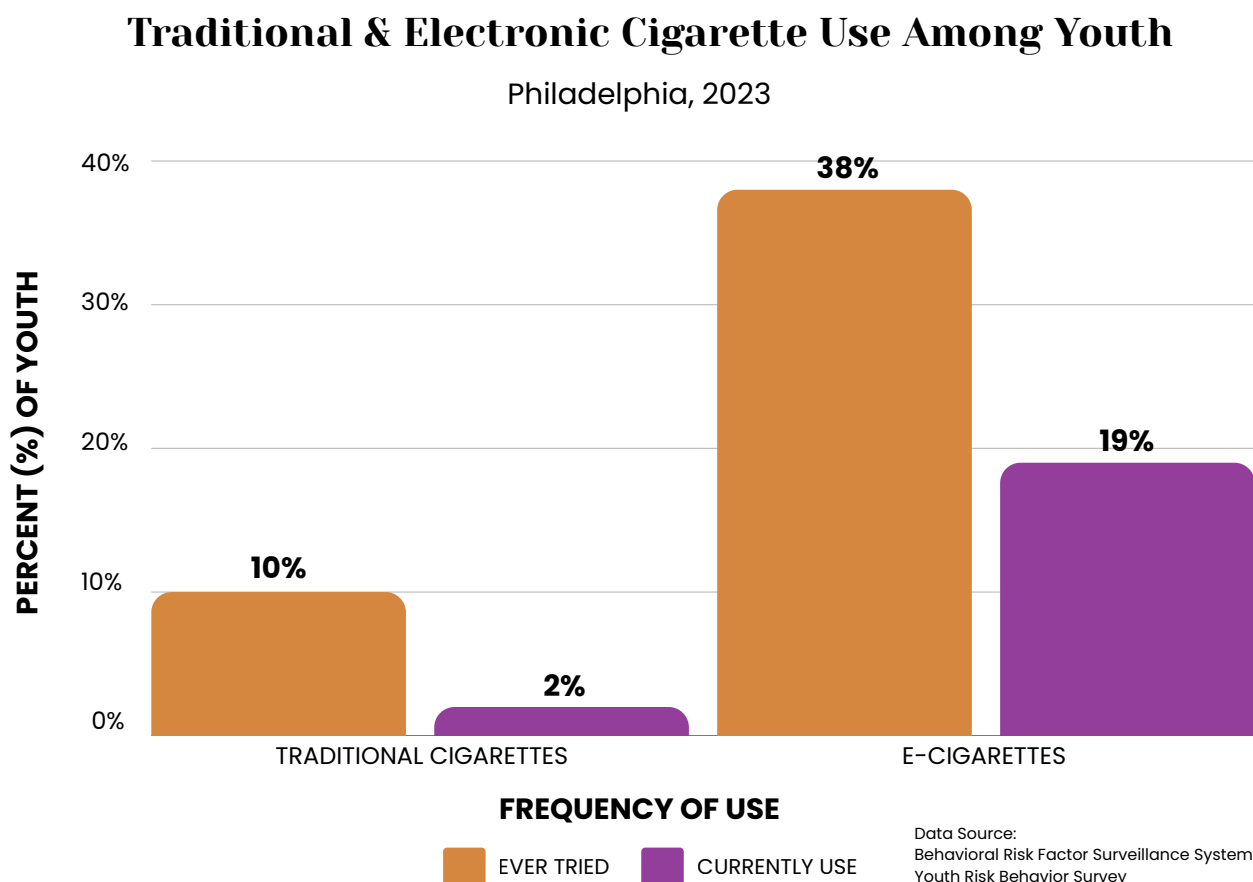
Intervention resources provide youth who are using tobacco with cessation tools and programs and behavioral support to help them successfully quit and maintain a tobacco-free lifestyle.

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Additional resources for youth, educators, and parents and further information about vape products.

## 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.



**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 addiction 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 through 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](mailto: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**

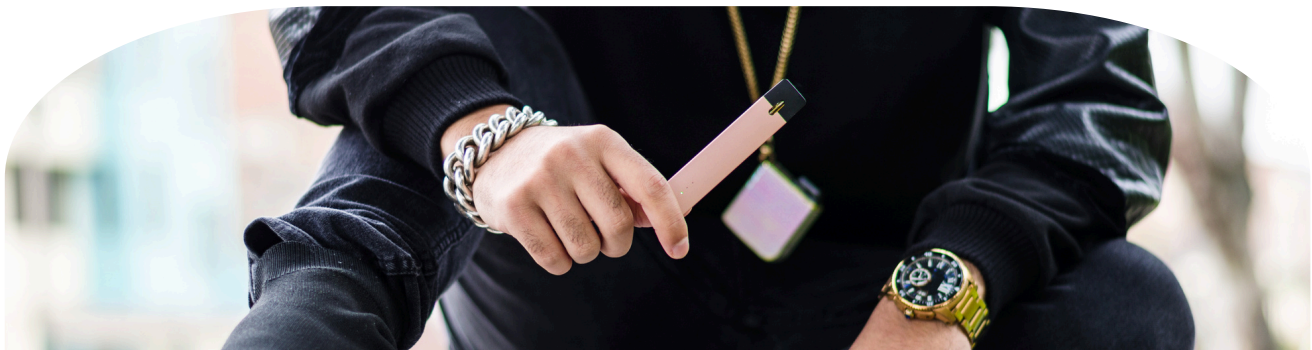
AGE RANGE: SCHOOL-AGED YOUTH      COST: FREE

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.

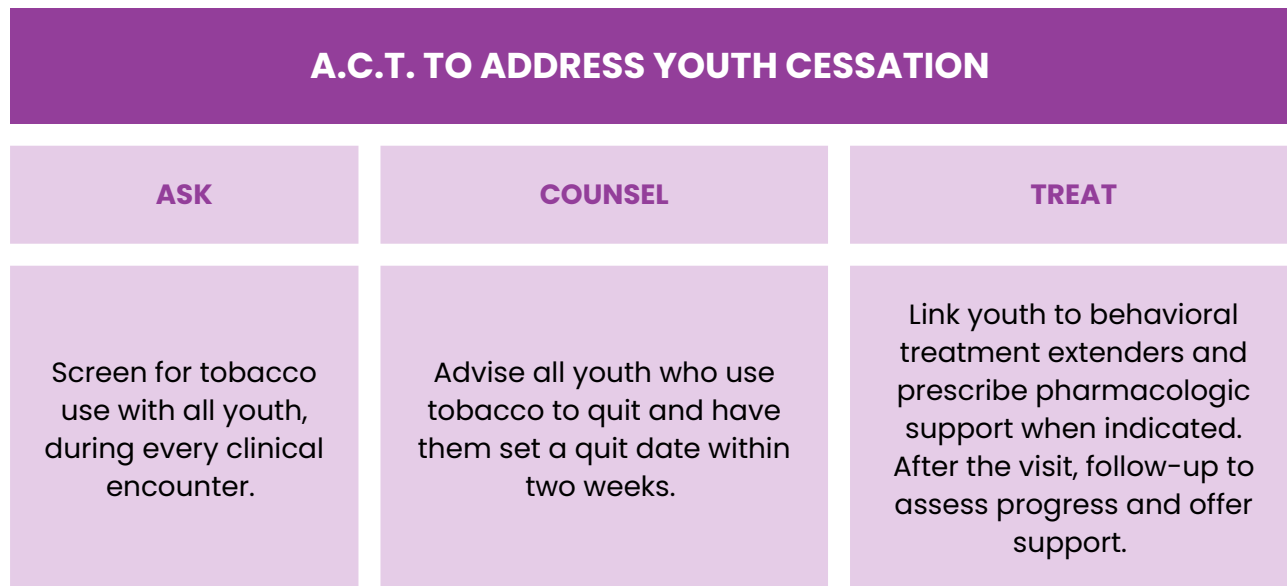


## SCREENING

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.



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
- [CRAFT 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

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### 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

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- [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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