

Nicotine in E-cigs can trigger lifelong addiction in kids: docs

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(HealthDay)—The earlier youngsters start using nicotine—even in the

form of e-cigarettes—the harder it is for them to quit a habit that could last a lifetime.

So says a new [report](#) from the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), the leading organization representing pediatricians in the United States.

"Given the difficulty that adolescents have attempting to stop smoking and use of tobacco products, the need for prevention efforts to stop them from starting is extremely important," report author Dr. Lorena Siqueira said in an AAP news release.

The AAP's statement comes after a Dec. 8 report from the U.S. Surgeon General's office, which noted that e-cigarette use rose 900 percent among U.S. [high school students](#) between 2011 and 2015. By 2014, more [high school](#) kids were using e-cigarettes than traditional smoked cigarettes, the Surgeon General said.

Some people claim that e-cigarettes may be a healthier "bridge" to quitting tobacco cigarettes. But the AAP contends that this has never been proven, and research suggests the devices encourage, rather than discourage, tobacco use.

Nicotine addiction at a very young age may up the odds for smoking well into adulthood, the pediatricians' group says.

According to prior research, about two-thirds of children who smoke in 6th grade will become regular adult smokers, compared to 46 percent of those who start smoking in 11th grade.

According to the new report, 90 percent of tobacco-dependent adults started smoking before age 18.

For teens, even infrequent smoking greatly increases the risk of

addiction. One study found that teens who smoked only monthly had a tenfold increased risk of tobacco addiction.

And quitting is just as tough, or tougher, for kids as it is for adults. The AAP notes that about 4 percent of youngsters who try to quit nicotine will succeed, compared to 5 percent of adults who try to quit. Children and teens also make more attempts to quit before succeeding, the report said.

The rapidly developing brains of children and teens are particularly susceptible to [nicotine addiction](#), the AAP added.

The report also said that nicotine is linked with many diseases such as certain cancers, kidney disease, [inflammatory bowel disease](#), osteoporosis and obesity. The drug also harms sexual function and fertility in men and women, and affects the development of babies whose mothers smoke, the AAP said.

Two anti-smoking experts said the new report is both timely and true.

"Some adolescents may be using e-cigarettes in an effort to stop their tobacco use, without success," said Pat Folan. She directs the Center for Tobacco Control at Northwell Health in Great Neck, N.Y. "Using these products may result in adolescents failing to quit and continuing to smoke, thereby sabotaging their good intentions."

She believes that certain initiatives—including raising the legal smoking/vaping age to 21 nationwide—could help slash the rate at which kids experiment with nicotine-laden products.

Jerome Kogan is a psychologist who leads the smoking-cessation program at Lenox Hill Hospital in New York City. He said the new AAP report "provides an excellent overview of current science relevant to this

important issue. Nicotine—not just [tobacco](#)—is addictive and harmful to the developing brain."

The report was published online Dec. 19 in the journal *Pediatrics*.

More information: The U.S. National Institute on Drug Abuse has more about [tobacco/nicotine](#).

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