

Health warnings on cigarettes could deter young people

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Young people are less likely to try cigarettes displaying the printed health warning 'Smoking kills' than standard cigarettes, according to a new study by Cancer Research UK. A survey including nearly 1,000 participants aged 16-24 revealed that a health warning on the cigarette paper made smokers and non-smokers three times less likely to try them than standard cigarettes. Credit: Cancer Research UK

Young people are less likely to try cigarettes with the printed health warning 'Smoking kills' on each stick than standard cigarettes, according to a new study by Cancer Research UK published in *Nicotine & Tobacco Research*.

Researchers wanted to examine new, innovative ways to reinforce [health](#) messages around [smoking](#). They surveyed nearly 1000 16-24 year olds from across the UK to evaluate their response to different cigarette designs.

A health warning on the side of each cigarette meant [young people](#)—including smokers and non-smokers—were around three times less likely to want to try them than standard cigarettes. Smokers were the most put off by them.

Young people also said that green cigarettes were less tempting than standard cigarettes.

Smoking tobacco is the biggest preventable cause of [cancer](#) in the UK and the leading cause of preventable death. While smoking rates among young people in the UK are going down, one in every six 16-24 year olds is a smoker in Great Britain. And in Scotland a fifth of all 16-24 year olds smoke.

Dr Crawford Moodie, Cancer Research UK-funded scientist and lead author said: "The study shows how cigarettes can be an important communication tool and that altering their appearance, with a health warning or an unappealing colour, can make them less desirable. Young people who start smoking are likely to continue to do so into adulthood, so anything that may deter smoking among this group could help to tackle the potential health repercussions in later life."



Young people are less likely to try cigarettes displaying the printed health warning 'Smoking kills' than standard cigarettes, according to a new study by Cancer Research UK. A survey including nearly 1,000 participants aged 16-24 revealed that a health warning on the cigarette paper made smokers and non-smokers three times less likely to try them than standard cigarettes. Credit: Cancer Research UK

George Butterworth, Cancer Research UK's senior policy manager said: "Too many young people are still taking up smoking in the UK. Government anti-smoking campaigns and tax rises on cigarettes remain the most effective methods to stop young people starting. We need to continue to explore innovative ways to turn young [people](#) off cigarettes to ensure that youth [smoking rates](#) continue to drop. This study shows that tactics like making the cigarettes themselves unappealing could be

an effective way of doing this."

More information: Crawford Moodie et al, The response of young adult smokers and non-smokers in the United Kingdom to dissuasive cigarettes: An online survey, *Nicotine & Tobacco Research* (2017). [DOI: 10.1093/ntr/ntx261](https://doi.org/10.1093/ntr/ntx261)

Provided by Cancer Research UK

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