

More U.S. teens seeing ads for E-cigarettes

March 15 2018, by E.j. Mundell, Healthday Reporter



(HealthDay)—A new report finds the number of American teens who view ads extolling the pleasures of e-cigarettes is on the rise.

Since studies show that ads for tobacco products are tied to upticks in use, the trend is worrisome, according to researchers from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

In fact, "among U.S. middle and [high school students](#) during 2014-2016, exposure to [e-cigarette](#) advertisements from any source increased from 68.9 percent [18.3 million] to 78.2 percent [20.5 million]," said the team led by Kristy Marynak. She's with the CDC's Office on Smoking and Health.

Ads were most likely to be seen in retail stores, the study found, but teens also viewed them on the internet, television, and in newspapers or magazines.

The report was issued on the same day that another CDC study reported that teens often believe e-cigarettes are relatively "harmless" compared to traditional cigarettes. That study, published in the journal *Pediatrics*, found that three-quarters of teens who used e-cigarettes didn't consider them harmful.

That's a notion e-cigarette advertisers would no doubt like to encourage, said one expert in lung health.

"The marketing of these products misleads kids as well as adults into thinking e-cigarettes are somehow safer, better, cool, fun, flavorful and may help smokers quit traditional cigarettes," said Patricia Folan, who directs the Center for Tobacco Control at Northwell Health in Great Neck, N.Y.

"What the advertising does not show is that these products have the strong potential to cause an addiction, which in many cases can last a lifetime," she said.

Indeed, studies suggest that kids who vape may be more prone to take up the smoking habit, too.

"It is widely recognized that e-cigarettes are the gateway to smoking [tobacco cigarettes](#) for teens and young adults," noted Dr. Len Horovitz, a pulmonary specialist at Lenox Hill Hospital in New York City.

He said e-cigarettes are not without their own dangers, as well.

The products "are also providing more than nicotine, with other propellants and organic compounds in the 'vaping' process," Horovitz noted.

He said that when e-cigarette ads are aimed at the young, "the problem is exacerbated and more exposure to ads that glamorize e-cigarettes will increase the number of young people vaping. This marketing approach must stop."

And that could be a possibility, according to the researchers of the new study. Marynak's group urged that "approaches to reduce youth access to e-cigarettes and exposure to e-cigarette advertising could include regulation of youth-oriented marketing," much as occurs with ads for traditional cigarettes.

Federal officials do seem to be taking a tougher stand on products containing nicotine. On Thursday, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration announced that it plans to lower the allowed amount of addictive nicotine in traditional cigarettes.

The new e-cigarette study was published March 15 in the CDC journal *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*.

More information: Patricia Folan, D.N.P., director, Center for

Tobacco Control, Northwell Health, Great Neck, N.Y.; Len Horovitz, M.D., pulmonary specialist, Lenox Hill Hospital, New York City; March 15, 2018, *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*

Find out more about the potential health effects of vaping at the [American Lung Association](#).

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