

No drop in teen use of tobacco products, CDC says, and E-cigs may be why

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(HealthDay)—Use of tobacco products by U.S. teens hasn't fallen since

2011, and federal officials say electronic cigarettes may be to blame.

One in four [high school students](#) now uses what officials define as a [tobacco](#) product. And e-cigarettes have eclipsed traditional cigarettes as the most widely used tobacco product among teens, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

"E-cigarettes are now the most commonly used tobacco product among youth, and use continues to climb," CDC Director Dr. Tom Frieden said Thursday in an agency news release. "No form of youth tobacco use is safe. Nicotine is an addictive drug, and use during adolescence may cause lasting harm to brain development."

Electronic cigarettes are battery-powered devices that heat nicotine and flavorings to create a vapor that is inhaled by the user.

Last year, 4.7 million middle and high [school students](#) said they used a tobacco product at least once in the previous 30 days, and more than 2.3 million used two or more [tobacco products](#).

Three million middle and [high school](#) students used e-cigarettes in 2015, up from 2.5 million in 2014, according to data from the 2015 U.S. National Youth Tobacco Survey.

Last year, 16 percent of high school and 5.3 percent of [middle school students](#) were users of e-cigarettes, making the devices the most widely used tobacco product among young people for the second straight year, federal officials said.

From 2011 to 2015, e-cigarette use rose from 1.5 to 16 percent among high school students and from 0.6 percent to 5.3 percent among middle school students, according to the study.

While there was a significant drop in cigarette smoking between 2011 and 2015, there was no change between 2014 and 2015, the report found. Last year, just over 9 percent of high school students and slightly over 2 percent of middle school students smoked cigarettes, making them the second most widely used tobacco product among youth.

Other tobacco products used by high school students in 2015 included: cigars, 8.6 percent; hookahs, just over 7 percent; smokeless tobacco, 6 percent; and bidis, 0.6 percent. Other tobacco products used by [middle school](#) students included: hookahs, 2 percent; smokeless tobacco, 1.8 percent; cigars, 1.6 percent; pipe tobacco, 0.4 percent; and bidis, 0.2 percent.

The new study appears in the April 14 issue of the CDC's *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*.

"We're very concerned that one in four high school students use tobacco, and that almost half of those use more than one product," Corinne Graffunder, director of CDC's Office on Smoking and Health, said in the news release.

"We know about 90 percent of all adult smokers first try cigarettes as teens. Fully implementing proven tobacco control strategies could prevent another generation of Americans from suffering from tobacco-related diseases and premature deaths," she added.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration is finalizing a rule to bring "tobacco products" such as e-cigarettes, hookahs (water pipes) and some or all cigars under its regulatory control. The agency already regulates cigarettes, cigarette tobacco, roll-your-own tobacco and [smokeless tobacco](#).

"The FDA remains deeply concerned about the overall high rate at which

children and adolescents use tobacco products, including novel products such as e-cigarettes and hookah," said Mitch Zeller, director of the FDA's Center for Tobacco Products.

"Finalizing the rule to bring additional products under the agency's tobacco authority is one of our highest priorities, and we look forward to a day in the near future when novel tobacco products like e-cigarettes and hookah are properly regulated and responsibly marketed," he said in the news release.

More information: The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has more on [youth and tobacco](#).

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