

Fewer U.S. kids use tobacco, but numbers still too high: officials

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(HealthDay)—The number of U.S. middle and high school students who use tobacco fell from 4.5 million in 2011 to 3.6 million in 2017, but that number is still far too high, federal health officials reported Thursday.

Nearly 1 in 5 high [school](#) students and 1 in 18 middle schoolers reported current use (within the past 30 days) of any tobacco product in 2017, compared to nearly 1 in 4 high school students and 1 in 13 middle school students in 2011.

Since 2014, electronic cigarettes have been the most widely used tobacco product among both middle and high school students, according to the National Youth Tobacco Survey from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Food and Drug Administration.

Of the 3.6 million middle and high school students who used tobacco products last year, 2.1 million used e-cigarettes.

The survey also showed that among children who were tobacco users in 2017, 47 percent of high schoolers and 42 percent of middle schoolers used two or more tobacco products.

Among middle school students in 2017, 3.3 percent used e-cigarettes, 2.1 percent smoked cigarettes, 1.9 percent used smokeless tobacco, 1.5 percent used cigars, 1.4 percent used hookahs, 0.4 smoked pipe tobacco, and 0.3 percent used bidis.

Among [high school students](#) in 2017, 11.7 percent used e-cigarettes, 7.7 percent used cigars, 7.6 percent used cigarettes, 5.5 percent used smokeless tobacco. 3.3 percent smoked hookahs, 0.8 percent used pipe tobacco, and 0.7 used bidis.

"Despite promising declines in tobacco use, far too many young people continue to use tobacco products, including e-cigarettes," CDC Director Dr. Robert Redfield said in an agency news release. "Comprehensive, sustained strategies can help prevent and reduce tobacco use and protect our nation's youth from this preventable health risk."

To curtail tobacco use by children, the health officials recommend:

- increasing prices of [tobacco products](#);
- sustaining media campaigns that warn about the dangers of tobacco product use;
- restricting youth access to [tobacco](#) products;
- protecting people from exposure to secondhand smoke and [e-cigarette](#) aerosol.

The survey findings were published in the June 8 issue of the CDC's *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*.

More information: The Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids has more on the issue of [children and tobacco](#).

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