



# Idaho Youth Vaping and Tobacco Survey

## Executive Summary

### Introduction

The University of Idaho and the Social and Economic Research Center of Washington State University, supported by Project Filter and the Idaho Millennium Fund, conducted a statewide Idaho Youth Vaping and Tobacco Survey from April-June 2023. All schools in Idaho with grades 6<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> were contacted, and 25 schools participated. From these schools, 2,213 students responded to the online or paper survey. The survey explored exposure, interaction with health professionals, peer pressure, beliefs and attitudes, cigarette, vape, and other tobacco use, behavioral health issues, grades, and participation in school and community activities. The data are useful for identifying actionable approaches to reduce vape and tobacco exposure, decrease youth nicotine initiation and use, and to promote nicotine cessation. Chi-square tests were conducted to examine differences between youth who use nicotine and youth who do not use nicotine. The results from this study are not generalizable for all youth in Idaho.

**Awareness of anti-vaping and tobacco ads-** Idaho youth report awareness of anti-vaping and tobacco messages (76.5%). Higher message awareness among youth ages 15-18 (79.9%) suggests that anti-vaping/tobacco campaigns may reach youth ages 12-14 (70.4%) less consistently.

**Youth are exposed to vapes and tobacco-** Over half of the youth (56.0%) report that at least some of the people closest to them use vapes or tobacco. Of youth who use nicotine, 42.2% report daily cigarette smoke or vape aerosol exposure compared to 8.9% of youth who do not use nicotine. A significant percentage of all youth (70.6%) identify daily exposure to vapes or tobacco products.

**Youth vape aerosol and cigarette smoke exposure locations-** Youth ages 15-18 are more likely to be exposed to vape aerosol or cigarette smoke than youth ages 12-14: outdoors (59.9% vs. 53.2%), in homes (27.5% vs. 23.8%), in cars (25.5% vs. 16.8%), at school (23.9% vs. 16.2%), indoors (18.5% vs. 15.5%), and at work (13.5% vs. 3.4%).

**Health professionals asking and advising youth about vapes and tobacco-** Only 44.2% of youth who use nicotine and 33.2% of youth who do not use nicotine report that they were asked by health professionals about vaping. Youth who use nicotine report health professionals asking about cigarette smoking use more often than youth who do use nicotine (47.7% vs. 36.5%). Youth were more often advised against vapes and tobacco use than asked about use directly.

**Beliefs that vapes are bad for health-** Most youth strongly agree vapes are bad for their health (89.0%). Youth who use nicotine report that they “strongly agree” that vaping is bad for their health significantly less often than youth who do not use nicotine, 24.6% vs. 71.3%.

**Beliefs about vape addictiveness compared to cigarettes-** Youth are closely divided in their beliefs that vapes are equally addictive (35.6%) or more addictive (38.1%) than cigarettes. Youth who use nicotine more often report that vapes are less addictive than cigarettes than youth who do not use nicotine.

**Perceptions about nicotine addiction-** Few youth (3.7%) believe that they are addicted to nicotine; 10.0% of youth report they do not know and 2.6% indicate that they may be addicted. A higher percentage of youth report a strong craving to use nicotine (9.1%), compared to youth who report nicotine use (8.6%). Fewer youth (7.5%) report that they need to use vapes or tobacco to feel okay than report strong nicotine cravings. The data suggests some confusion about nicotine addiction.

**Nicotine use-** Most youth report not using vapes (91.4%), cigarettes (97.1%), smokeless tobacco (97.2%), and cigars, cigarillos, hookah, bidis, or kreteks (97.6%). The nicotine-containing product most used was vapes (8.6%) as follows: every day (3.5%), most days (1.3%), and some days (3.8%).

**Quitting nicotine and quitting methods-** 8.8% of youth report trying to quit using nicotine. Reports of quit attempts are higher among youth ages 15-18 (10.0%) compared to those ages 12-14 (6.2%). The most reported quitting method was talking to an adult (6.2%), a friend (6.1%), looking up information online (3.6%), and calling or texting a Quitline (1.6%). Youth who use nicotine are more likely to talk to a friend to seek help quitting nicotine (20.8%) than looking up quitting information online (14.7%).

**Feeling sad or hopeless-** Most youth report at least some days feeling sad or hopeless, while 14.6% report no days. Youth who use nicotine report feeling sad and hopeless everyday significantly more often than youth who do not use nicotine (38.8% vs. 8.6%) and report no days feeling sad and hopeless less often (25.1% vs. 37.3%).

**Feeling stress and anxiety-** Overall, students report stress and anxiety often, 17.3% report no days feeling stress and anxiety. Youth who use nicotine report significantly more stress and anxiety everyday more often than youth who do not use nicotine every day (46.4% vs 21.4%) and report no days of stress and anxiety less often (14.6% vs. 17.6%).

**Nicotine use and reported grades-** Nicotine use relates significantly to lower reported grades in school: "Mostly A's" in school, 20.7% use nicotine, 44.9% do not use nicotine; Mostly B's," 26.1% use nicotine, 30.0% do not use nicotine; "Mostly C's" category, 26.1% use nicotine; 30.0% do not use nicotine, "Mostly D's", 8.5 % use nicotine, 3.5% do not use nicotine; Mostly F's," 11.2% use nicotine and 1.9% are those who do not use nicotine.

**Nicotine use and out-of-school participation-** Youth who use nicotine (35.4%) report no participation in school sports, clubs, church, or other activities more often than youth who do not use nicotine (19.1%).

### **Conclusions and Opportunities**

- Most youth do not report vape or tobacco use. More youth report vaping than use of any other tobacco product. Youth ages 12-14 report greater tobacco use than youth ages 15-18 except for vapes. Youth identifying as multiple races reported higher nicotine use.
- Most youth are exposed to tobacco and vaping by their close contacts and in their daily lives.
- Most youth do not recall being asked about using vapes or tobacco products, nor advised to not use vapes or tobacco by health professionals.
- Confusion exists about the addictiveness and health harms of vapes. Youth who use nicotine report the greatest uncertainty about the health impacts of vapes.
- Nicotine use is significantly associated with sadness and hopelessness, stress and anxiety.
- Youth report quit attempts; of those who attempt to quit, they more often seek out help from friends than evidence-based resources.
- Youth who use nicotine are more likely to report poorer grades and limited engagement in school and community activities.
- Continued nicotine education and surveillance of youth nicotine use and other related behaviors is vital to strategically prevent and address youth nicotine use.
- Consideration of relationships between nicotine use and behavioral health appears important to stem youth nicotine use and to identify youth at risk for behavioral health concerns.

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Findings from the Idaho Youth Vaping and Tobacco Survey and the Idaho Tobacco Retail Study are available at: <https://modelingidahohhealth.org/>