

Jackson County Department of Public Health

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TOBACCO USE RISING AMONG YOUTH & YOUNG ADULTS

According to the 2016 US Surgeon General's Report, e-cigarette use among youth and young adults has become a public health concern. Electronic-cigarettes, or e-cigarettes, are battery-powered devices that heat a liquid into an aerosol that the user inhales. The liquid is usually made of nicotine from tobacco, flavoring, and other additives. These devices can also be used to deliver marijuana and other drugs.

In Western North Carolina, 27% of high school and 10.4% of middle school students report using non-cigarette products such as e-cigarettes, cigars, and hookahs. E-cigarettes have been marketed to youth by promoting flavors and using media channels and approaches that have been used in the past for marketing conventional tobacco products to youth and young adults. More than 85% of e-cigarette users ages 12-17 use flavored e-cigarettes, and flavors are the leading reason for youth use. More than 9 of 10 young adult e-cigarette users said they use e-cigarettes flavored to taste like menthol, alcohol, fruit, chocolate, or other sweets.

Marketed as a safe alternative to cigarettes and other tobacco products, research shows that e-cigarettes are not harmless, as many contain highly addictive nicotine. Even when e-cigarettes do not contain nicotine, the liquids inside can include solvents, flavorants, and toxicants. Aerosol created by e-cigarettes also contains harmful ingredients that are potentially harmful to the public's health.

Parents, teachers, health care providers, and others who influence youth and young adults can advise and inform them of the dangers of nicotine; discourage youth tobacco use in any form, including e-cigarettes; and set a positive example by being tobacco-free themselves

For more information and to speak to a Tobacco Treatment Specialist, please contact Janelle Messer, Health Education Supervisor, at (828) 587-8238 or janellemesser@jacksonnc.org.

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