



A CUP OF HEALTH WITH CDC

Young Smokers

Current Tobacco Product Use Among Middle and High School Students – United States, 2011-2012

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[Announcer] This program is presented by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

[Dr. Gaynes] Welcome to *A Cup of Health with CDC*, a weekly feature of the *MMWR*, the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report. I'm your host, Dr. Robert Gaynes.

Tobacco use is the leading preventable cause of death and disease in the U.S. A recent study found that emerging tobacco products, such as e-cigarettes, are gaining popularity among middle and high school students.

Rene Arrazola is a researcher with CDC's Office on Smoking and Health. He's joining us today to discuss ways to prevent young people from using tobacco products. Welcome to the show, Rene.

[Dr. Arrazola] Thanks for having me, Bob.

[Dr. Gaynes] Rene, at what age do most young people start smoking?

[Dr. Arrazola] We're seeing smoking start as early as in middle school. In fact, nearly nine out of 10 smokers start smoking by age 18 and 99 percent of them start by 26.

[Dr. Gaynes] What kinds of tobacco products are most popular among young people these days?

[Dr. Arrazola] Well, traditional cigarette use remains a significant problem. We have seen an increase in the use of electronic cigarettes among middle school and high school age kids, and an increase of hookah use among high school age kids. Also, high school boys smoke cigars at about the same rate as cigarettes, and among high school age African Americans, cigar use has more than doubled since 2009. I should point out, we think a lot of the cigar use is in a relatively new category of cigars. They look almost identical to cigarettes but are much cheaper and can be made with candy and fruit flavors.

[Dr. Gaynes] What kinds of problems are young people experiencing from tobacco use?

[Dr. Arrazola] A major problem with tobacco use at a young age is of addiction. Many teens and young adults get hooked on nicotine, even if they plan to quit after a short time. They often find out too late how addictive nicotine can be. And the best way to avoid a lifetime of addiction is to never start using tobacco in the first place.

[Dr. Gaynes] What can be done to discourage kids from using tobacco products?

[Dr. Arrazola] Specific strategies and programs work to prevent and reduce tobacco use. These include raising the price of tobacco products, this is specifically true for young people; making public places 100 percent smoke-free; hard hitting media campaigns that show the deadly and disfiguring dangers of tobacco use; and programs that help people quit. At an individual level, adults can set a good example by quitting tobacco and making their homes and vehicles tobacco-free.

[Dr. Gaynes] Rene, where can listeners get more information about preventing tobacco use among young people?

[Dr. Arrazola] They can visit our website at cdc.gov/tobacco.

[Dr. Gaynes] Thanks, Rene. I've been talking today with CDC's Rene Arrazola about ways to keep young people from using tobacco products.

Remember, tobacco use is the leading preventable cause of disease and death in the U.S. Discussing its dangers with kids is important for preventing the use of these products later in life.

Until next time, be well. This is Dr. Robert Gaynes for *A Cup of Health with CDC*.

[Announcer] For the most accurate health information, visit www.cdc.gov or call 1-800-CDC-INFO.