

# Youth Nicotine 101

## What is nicotine?

Nicotine is a drug, but not just any drug. It's an addictive stimulant that keeps users hooked. Traditionally, nicotine is derived from tobacco plants. However, synthetic, lab-made nicotine is just as addictive as tobacco-derived nicotine.

## Why is it dangerous for kids?

- Nicotine exposure during adolescence can harm brain development, impacting learning, memory and focus.
- Nicotine increases the risk for developing addiction to other tobacco products.
- Nicotine dependence is linked to higher rates of depression, anxiety and other mental health struggles among teens.
- Many nicotine products, like vapes, may contain compounds and heavy metals that can cause cancer.

## Popular Products

### VAPES

- Sleek, tech-inspired designs
- Discreetly packaged
- Falsely marketed as “stress relievers” and “safe”
- Popular brands: ELFBAR, GEEKBAR, VUSE



## POUCHES

- Small, harmless-looking pouches
- Easily hidden in cheeks and lips
- Falsely marketed as a “safe,” tobacco-free option
- Popular brands: Zyn, On!, Zone



## How the tobacco industry hooks them:

9 out of 10 teens who vape use flavored products. Plus, flavored nicotine products, like vapes and pouches, are available online. The tobacco industry uses social media influencers, product placement and sponsorships to draw teens in, and nicotine keeps kids coming back for more by releasing dopamine, the brain’s “feel good” chemical.

## What you can do:

- Have an open and judgment-free conversation.
- Use our age-specific [conversation guides](#) or walk through our [virtual learnings](#).
- Listen to your kids’ thoughts, fears and questions.
- Share honest facts and statistics.
- Build an understanding together.