Know! The New Line of Nicotine Products Enticing Youth

You're likely familiar with the dangers of vaping, especially among youth. Juul and other electronic cigarettes came onto the market purportedly to help adult cigarette smokers kick the habit. Instead, they've introduced nicotine to a new generation of non-smoking teens—thus creating our country's current youth vaping epidemic. With vaping under fire, it's no surprise that multinational corporations are finding new ways to profit from others' addictions.

Have you heard of nicotine pouches? If you haven't, now's the time to learn about them and share the risks with your children, because these tiny pouches have all the makings to become the next big problem.

Nicotine Pouches

Nicotine pouches are pre-portioned, little, white sacks filled with a crystal-like substance that contain nicotine but not tobacco. The user puts the pouch between the lip and gums, just like chewing tobacco, which is also known as dip or snus. The user's saliva then mixes to create a nicotine "juice" that is meant to be swallowed.

This product is promoted as discreet, fresh, and able to be conveniently enjoyed at any time—because there is no smoke, no smell, no need to spit, and no refrigeration required. One website even reassures the potential user that there is no need to worry, because the only person who will know you are enjoying your nicotine pouch is you.

Pouches are sold in different strengths of nicotine and in a variety of flavors, including black cherry, cinnamon, citrus, coffee, dragon fruit, peppermint, spearmint, and wintergreen. Plus, they say they won't stain your teeth and are billed as gluten-free.

These pouches and the flavors they come in are certainly enticing to young people. Unlike vaping, no smoke passes through the airways and into the lungs when using these pouches. However, nicotine is nicotine, no matter how you package it, and the dangers of this substance go beyond the airways.

The Effects of Nicotine on Youth

Nicotine is a highly addictive drug that raises blood pressure, causes adrenaline to spike, increases heart rate, and elevates one's likelihood for a heart attack. Youth are even more susceptible to nicotine's negative effects and become dependent on this drug more rapidly than adults. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):

- Nicotine can harm the developing adolescent brain. The brain keeps developing until about age 25.
- Using nicotine in adolescence can harm the parts of the brain that control attention, learning, mood, and impulse control.
- Each time our brain creates a new memory or learns a new skill, stronger connections—or synapses—are built between brain cells. Young people's brains build synapses faster than adult brains. Nicotine changes the way these synapses are formed.
- Using nicotine in adolescence may also increase risk for future addiction to other drugs.

Just as one harmful product is brought to light, another harmful product seems to emerge from the darkness to take its place. While we may not be aware of every single nicotine product out there to specifically warn our children about, what we can do is to talk with them about the dangers of this substance in any form, tell them to steer clear of it, and of course step in and seek help if we suspect or know our child is using nicotine products.

If you're concerned about you or someone else, **get help at findtreatment.gov**.

Sources

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): Quick Facts on the Risks of E-Cigarettes for Kids, Teens, and Young Adults (Nicotine).

About Know! Parent Tips

Everyone has a role in prevention. By reading and sharing this Know! Parent Tip today, you're doing your part to prevent substance misuse and create a healthier world for all.

We created these free parent tips to empower parents like you. Know! helps you promote health and wellness and protect the

Prevention Action Alliance

young person in your life from unhealthy behaviors, including alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use. However, we rely on donations from people like you to provide these tips. If you found this tip interesting or helpful, [please consider donating at preventionactionalliance.org/donate](preventionactionalliance.org/donate).

Know! Parent Tips are provided by Prevention Action Alliance with support from the Ohio Department of Mental Health & Addiction Services, the Ohio Department of Education, and Start Talking!.

Know! Parent Tips are also available in Spanish at the Know! archives.

Start Talking! Building a Drug-Free Future

Ohio | Department of Education

Mental Health & Addiction Services | Ohio