

# YOUTH SURVEY



FAIRFAX COUNTY

## TEEN VAPING AND TOBACCO USE in Fairfax County

Self-reported by 8th, 10th, and 12th grade students on the Fairfax County Youth Survey

9.7% report using e-cigarettes in the past month   
<0.1% report smoking a pack or more of cigarettes a day

70% increase, from 2015 to 2017, in reported past month e-cigarette use  
18% of 12th graders have ever smoked cigarettes

85% decrease, from 2001 to 2017, in reported past month cigarette use   
4% report using smokeless tobacco in the past month 

## What You Need to Know

Mirroring national trends, the percentage of Fairfax County teens who smoke cigarettes continues to fall; fewer than 3% report smoking in the past month, down 85% since the first Fairfax County Youth Survey in 2001. Attitudes toward smoking are consistent with this trend. Over 90% say it's wrong or very wrong for teens to smoke cigarettes, and 90% believe there's moderate to great risk in smoking cigarettes. Ninety-seven percent report their parents think it's wrong or very wrong for them to smoke cigarettes.

Among teens who have ever smoked cigarettes, 33% first smoked before they turned 13. Over half (53%), including 69% of 8th graders, say it would be very hard to get cigarettes.

Use of smokeless tobacco has declined slightly over the past few years. Four percent report using smokeless tobacco in the past month, so it remains more common than cigarettes.

E-cigarette use is most common, and its prevalence has increased rapidly over the past three years. Ten percent of students report using e-cigarettes in the past month, a 70% increase over 2015, the first year the Youth Survey included questions on e-cigarettes.

As with other substances, older students are more likely to use e-cigarettes; 16% of 12th graders report use in the past month. Males (11%) are more likely than females (8%) to use e-cigarettes. Heterosexual

students (10%) are slightly more likely than their LGBQ peers (8%) to smoke e-cigarettes (as opposed to cigarette use, where 4% of LGBQ students smoke, compared to 2% of heterosexual students).

There also are racial and ethnic disparities in e-cigarette use. Use is most common among white students (13%). Eleven percent of students reporting other or multiple races smoke e-cigarettes, compared to 10% of Hispanic students, 6% of black students, and 5% of Asian students.

## What Can You Do?

### KNOW THE FACTS AND HAVE THE CONVERSATION

Even when the packaging states otherwise, many e-cigarettes contain nicotine, which is highly addictive. Nicotine exposure can have adverse effects on attention, learning, and impulse control. It can increase the likelihood of mood disorders and susceptibility to addiction.

E-cigarettes come in many shapes and sizes, including very small devices shaped like a USB device. This makes their use even easier to hide from teachers and parents. Devices often can be used to deliver marijuana and other drugs, and can pose burning and poisoning risks. Familiarize yourself with the devices so you know what to look for.

The liquids used in e-cigarettes, and the vapors created by them, can contain numerous ingredients known to be harmful to health. Apart from nicotine, they can contain ingredients such as diacetyl, a chemical linked to serious lung

disease; volatile organic compounds such as benzene, which is found in car exhaust; and heavy metals, such as nickel, tin, and lead.

While there is evidence that a complete switch to e-cigarette use can help conventional cigarette smokers quit, there is also strong evidence that e-cigarette use can be a powerful gateway to conventional cigarette use among teens.

Be clear about your expectations. Teens are less likely to use tobacco and vaping products (or any other substance) when their parents are clear that they do not approve of such use. Be direct and specify the consequences your child will face if they smoke or vape.

Share facts and resources. Make sure your child knows the dangers of tobacco use and vaping. Many believe that vaping is harmless without

understanding the contents and potential harmful effects of using e-cigarettes.

Answer their questions. Be honest and forthright; if you used to smoke (or smoke now), discuss your struggles with trying to quit and any regrets you may have. If your child asks a question you don't know the answer to, make an effort to find the information.

Remind and repeat. Consistently remind your teen of your expectations. Check in often to see if they are experiencing any difficulties or have any concerns. Praise them for avoiding tobacco, vaping, and other substance use. Offer to help connect them, or their peers, to support for quitting if needed.

Adapted from *Know the Risks: E-Cigarettes and Young People*.

## Who Can Help?

Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board (CSB)  
[www.fairfaxcounty.gov/csb](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/csb)  
Entry & Referral 703-383-8500, TTY 711  
24-Hour Emergency Services 703-573-5679, TTY 711

Fairfax County Public Schools  
[www.bit.ly/FCPSspecialsvcs](http://www.bit.ly/FCPSspecialsvcs)  
Intervention & Prevention Services 571-423-4020  
Student Safety & Wellness 571-423-4270

# 3 THREE to SUCCEED

The Factors That Matter

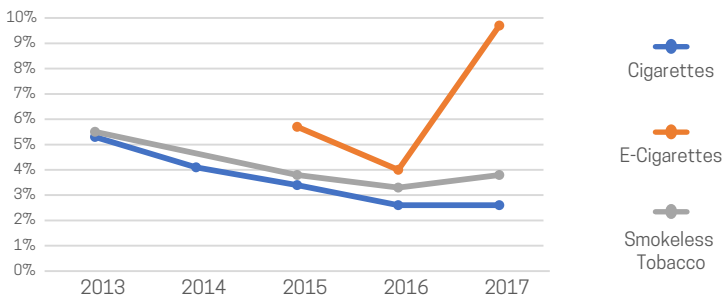
Data from the Youth Survey reinforces decades of research that shows that when youth have protective factors (also known as assets) in their lives, they do better in lots of different areas. **Having just three protective factors dramatically reduces the likelihood that youth will engage in risky behaviors.** The Youth Survey shows that every protective factor makes a difference.

Young people in Fairfax County report positive influences from the people and opportunities in their lives. Take action to be an asset in a young person's life and help to build a stronger, more positive community that benefits ALL children and youth.

## Past 30-Day Use

	OVERALL		8 <sup>TH</sup> GRADE		10 <sup>TH</sup> GRADE		12 <sup>TH</sup> GRADE	
	FAIRFAX	US*	FAIRFAX	US*	FAIRFAX	US*	FAIRFAX	US*
CIGARETTES	2.6	5.4	1.0	1.9	1.9	5.0	5.0	9.7
E-CIGARETTES	9.7	12.0	4.1	6.6	9.5	13.1	15.5	16.6
SMOKELESS TOBACCO	3.8	3.5	2.0	1.7	3.4	3.8	6.0	4.9

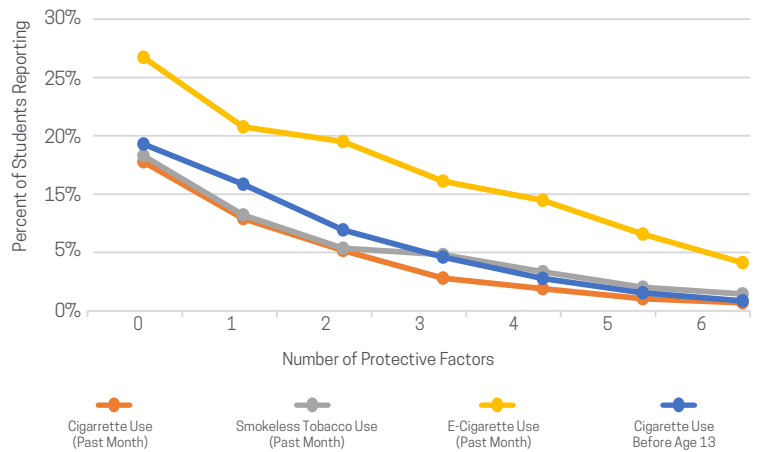
\*National comparisons are from the 2017 Monitoring the Future Survey.



## Related Factors

Compared to their peers who do not use e-cigarettes, students who do are:

- Less likely to get 8 or more hours of sleep on an average school night (20% to 32%)
- More likely to report high levels of stress (46% to 35%)
- More likely to report depressive symptoms (40% to 26%)
- More likely to report drinking and driving (18% to 3%)



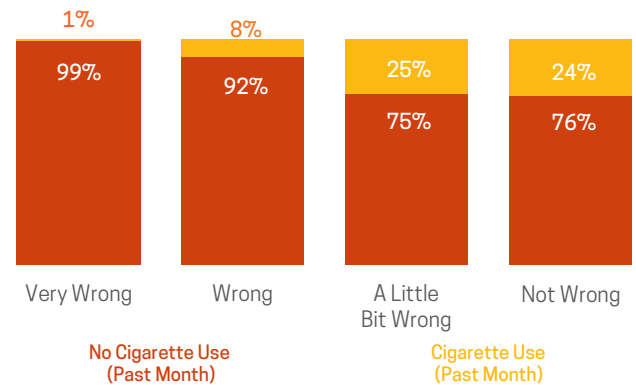
## Protective Factors

- Having high personal integrity
- Having community adults to talk to
- Performing community service
- Participating in extracurricular activities
- Having teachers recognize good work
- Having parents available for help

## What Parents Think Matters

**99%** of students who report their parents disapprove of them smoking cigarettes (Very Wrong) didn't smoke in the past month.

**76%** of those who report their parents were fine with them smoking (Not Wrong) didn't smoke.



## WEBSITES FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Vaping: What Students Should Know [www.fcps.edu/vaping](http://www.fcps.edu/vaping)
- Fairfax County Youth Survey [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/youthsurvey](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/youthsurvey)
- Fairfax County Prevention System [www.bit.ly/FairfaxPrevention](http://www.bit.ly/FairfaxPrevention)
- NIDA for Teens [www.bit.ly/nidasmoking](http://www.bit.ly/nidasmoking)
- The Real Cost [therealcost.betobaccofree.hhs.gov](http://therealcost.betobaccofree.hhs.gov)

The Fairfax County Youth Survey was administered in the fall of 2017.



Fairfax County is committed to nondiscrimination on the basis of disability in all county programs, services and activities. Reasonable accommodations will be provided upon request. For information, call 703-324-4600, TTY 711.



A Fairfax County, Va., publication  
January 2019