

Champions Against Nicotine: What School Nurses Need to Know

As a school nurse, you may already be aware of the growing prevalence of new nicotine products among students. These include e-cigarettes and emerging oral nicotine products. Today's youth face an expanding array of **nicotine threats** that could lead to addiction, affecting their **long-term health and well-being**.



Why it Matters

- Adolescents' brains are developing until their mid-20s, making them **more vulnerable** to nicotine's harmful effects. This includes issues such as reduced **impulse control, attention problems, cognitive deficits, and mood disorders**.
- Early nicotine use increases the risk of a **lifetime of struggles** with addiction.
- **Flavored nicotine products**, which are popular among **over 85% of student users**, are especially concerning as they increase the likelihood of youth experimentation.



Actions You Can Take

Educate Students: As a health care professional, share your knowledge about the health risks of nicotine use.

Policy Awareness: Familiarize yourself with your school's tobacco-use policy and enforce it appropriately, including the confiscation of prohibited items.

Promote Prevention: Advocate for educational programs that address nicotine use within your school.

Educate Parents: Be a resource by informing parents on the health risks of nicotine use and how to identify signs of nicotine use.

Recognize Products: trends among youth so you can identify when they appear

Collaborate with Staff: Partner with educators, coaches, counselors, and other administrators to raise awareness about the associated risks of nicotine products.

- Provide training and educational materials to help staff recognize early signs of nicotine use among their students.
- Equip educators with evidence-based resources and conversation guides to prevent nicotine use.