



Resources for School Nurses: tobacco screening, cessation, and prevention

Utah Tobacco Prevention & Control Program

2024

Resources for school nurses

Tobacco screening, cessation, and prevention

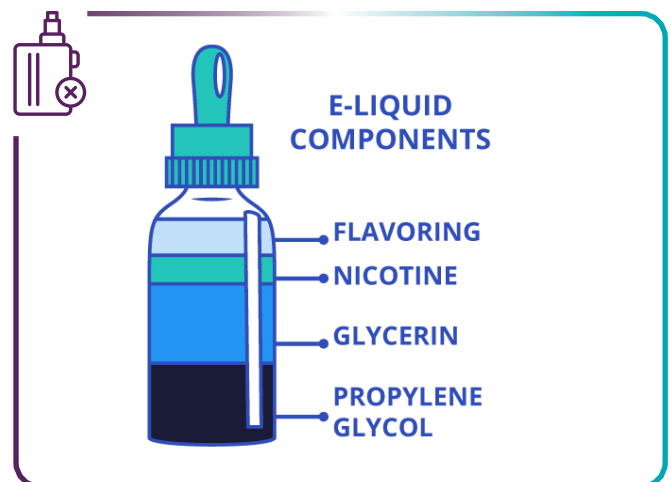
Schools greatly influence the students they serve and can play a major role in reducing tobacco use among youth. As a healthcare professional who works in a school, you have the opportunity to screen for all forms of tobacco use, including vaping, and to educate youth and administrators on their dangers. Created by the Tobacco Prevention & Control Program from the Utah Department of Health & Human Services, this guide will assist you in screening for tobacco use and referring youth to cessation and prevention resources.

The emergence of electronic cigarettes has become a new threat to the health of Utah's youth. Innovative device designs, inviting flavors, social media advertising, peer pressure, and stressful environmental factors that affect health outcomes contribute to high experimentation and use rates among young people. Some important information to note:

- 1 in 7 Utah high school students have tried e-cigarettes;¹
- 99% of e-cigarettes contain nicotine;²
- nicotine harms the developing brain of youth and puts them at risk for addiction to other drugs; and³
- youth tobacco use is linked to low academic performance and truancy.^{4,5}

What is vaping?

Vapes heat nicotine extracts from tobacco with other harmful chemicals to create aerosols that are inhaled by users. Despite the perception that vapes do not contain nicotine, nearly all do. Moreover, other toxic ingredients can include: propylene glycol (an ingredient in antifreeze), acrolein (an herbicide), diacetyl (a chemical linked to lung disease), heavy metals (like nickel, tin, or lead), and benzene (a chemical in car exhaust). Aerosol from e-cigarettes can also contain harmful and potentially harmful substances. These include cancer-causing chemicals and tiny particles that can be inhaled deep into lungs.⁶



¹ CDC, Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System, 2019.

² Sales of Nicotine Electronic Cigarette products, United States 2015

³ Know the Risks: E-cigarettes & Young People | U.S. Surgeon General's Report

⁴ Tobacco Use and Academic Achievement

⁵ Smoking and school absenteeism among 15- to 16-year-old adolescents

⁶ Health Effects of Vaping | Smoking and Tobacco Use | CDC

The role of the school nurse in creating a tobacco-free school

Nurses have an opportunity to educate administrators that addiction is a complex disease and use of a substance is not a willful defiance of school rules. If a student is dependent on nicotine or another substance, they need treatment interventions, not further isolation with increased opportunity to engage in unhealthy behaviors (*Public Health Law Center, 2019b*). Vaping is a long-term issue that will not be solved by a one-time presentation. The school nurse should deliver or coordinate vape education to staff and parents on a regular basis.

School culture is strengthened by students developing positive social norms. If students perceive that most of their peers do not use tobacco or vape, then they are less likely to start using tobacco and nicotine (*USDHHS, 2012*). School nurses can encourage coaches and other influential school staff to discuss the harms of tobacco and vaping with teams and classes. Nurses can also sponsor or support clubs and peer leadership programs that seek to raise awareness around the dangers of tobacco and substance use, and work to change school norms. The majority of students do not use tobacco and nicotine products and often welcome support in resisting marketing targeted at them and daily peer pressure.



Advocate for non-punitive procedures for student violations of the school's tobacco policy.

Suggestion: Educate administrators on the nature of addiction and provide information on cessation intervention and referral.



Deliver and/or coordinate tobacco and e-cigarette education to parents and staff on a regular basis.

Suggestion: Include all buildings: elementary, middle, and high school. Credible handouts and graphics have already been developed. See Table 1.



Participate in reviewing curriculum content about alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs.

Suggestion: Determine what updates need to be made and provide guidance on the need for evidence-based resources.



Ensure that students, staff, and parents who are interested in quitting are referred to treatment.

Suggestion: Provide appropriate cessation resources, including the state quitline.



Support our sponsor clubs and student programs that raise awareness around the dangers of tobacco and substance abuse.

Suggestion: Advocate for student support in resisting marketing and peer pressure, and setting positive social norms.



Advocate for state initiatives and local policies that have been shown to prevent and reduce youth tobacco use.

Suggestion: Consult with others in the school district who may focus on policy initiatives and advocate as a school-based health professional.

Chart image from *The Role of the School Nurse in Creating a Vape-Free School* | NASN School Nurse

Resources for school nurses

Tobacco screening, cessation, and prevention

The following resources are to help school nurses to screen for tobacco product use, and to help youth quit tobacco and vape products. This guide will be updated and distributed each year.

1 Ask

Screen for tobacco or vaping use with every patient.

How to ask:

- *What do you already know about vapes? Juuling?*
- *What experiences, if any, have you had with vapes? Juuls? Puff Bars?*
- *What questions, if any, do you have about using vapes? SMOK? Melatonin vapes? Juuls?*
- *Have you used a [e-cigarette]?*
- *Do you have any friends who use tobacco or vaping products?*
- *Have you felt any pressure to begin vaping?*

2 Advise

Advise all patients about the risks of tobacco and vaping use.

Educate patients as to the risks of tobacco use.

- ▶ Nicotine rewires and changes a young person's brain.
- ▶ Using nicotine increases heart rate.
- ▶ Nicotine can cause acid reflux.
- ▶ Other chemicals in e-cigs, along with nicotine, can cause trouble breathing and damage to the lungs.

Encourage youth to not start tobacco use.

3 Connect

Connect youth to resources and cessation services.

- *Is it OK with you if I share what I think would be best for your health?*
- *What do you think about that?*
- *Do you know what resources are available to you in the state of Utah?*

Cessation resources

waytoquit.org
ut.mylifemyquit.org

4

Quitting tobacco

While quitting can be hard, there are many resources for those who are ready. Different quit methods work for different people, and no two paths to quitting are the same. Often, several attempts are needed before the right method is found.

While the decision to quit tobacco is always one teens must make themselves, there are several ways you can help promote the My Life, My Quit program:

- Let teens know you are concerned about the impact of tobacco use, including vaping, on their current and long-term health.
- Tell them you want to support their plan to stop and ask if they will sign up for the My Life, My Quit program. Be sure to mention it is free and confidential.
- If they are not willing to enroll right then, provide them with information about how to enroll and let them know they have support to help them quit.
- If a teen is ready to get started, they can text, call, or enroll online. It's fast and simple.
- Some teens may want your help taking the first step of calling or sending the text. But remember, they need to do the work in order to be successful.

MY LIFE MY QUIT™

My Life, My Quit™ is the free and confidential way to quit smoking or vaping for teenagers. My Life, My Quit includes resources to help educate youth of the dangers of tobacco use and how to quit. Youth can also get tobacco cessation advice by texting: **“Start My Quit” to 366072.**

My Life, My Quit

The My Life, My Quit program is a free and confidential service developed by National Jewish Health, the nation's No. 1 respiratory hospital, for teens who want help quitting all forms of tobacco including vaping. The tobacco treatment specialists have completed extensive training on adolescent cognitive and psychosocial development from a psychologist and professor at Stanford University who specializes in adolescent tobacco prevention.

My Life, My Quit's online program allows youth to go at their own pace. The program is self-guided and includes information about vaping and tobacco, and activities to support quitting and stress relief. Coaches are available on demand via text or live chat for additional support and tips.

My Life, My Quit has free posters to download and print for display in classrooms and school.



**DOES VAPING
HAVE YOU
ON THE SIDELINE?**

Text “Start My Quit” to 36072 or call 855-891-9989.
Free, confidential help to quit vaping, smoking, or chewing. Just for teens.

WWW.MYLIFEMYQUIT.COM

MY LIFE MY QUIT™

Resources for school nurses

Tobacco prevention

The following resources can help prevent tobacco and vape use among youth. This guide will be updated and distributed each year.

Classroom resources

[CATCH My Breath](#) is a free program that offers in-class activities, teacher education, online resources, and take-home materials for parents. The goal is to increase students' knowledge of e-cigarettes, nicotine, and addiction dangers while cutting their intended use of the product in the future.

[ASPIRE \(A Smoking Prevention Interactive Experience\)](#) is a free online prevention education resource from The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center. ASPIRE delivers tobacco prevention education to teens and adolescents at a self-directed pace. If you are interested in implementing ASPIRE in your school, please contact your local health department or Julie Christie (jchristie@utah.gov).

[CDC's Office on Smoking and Health \(OSH\)](#) has developed a presentation to educate youth on e-cigarettes, their health risks, factors that lead to usage, and how to avoid them.

[Vaping: Know the truth](#) is a self-led interactive curriculum that educates students about the health dangers of e-cigarette use and offers resources to help young people who are currently using e-cigarettes to quit.

The [Tobacco Education Resource Library](#) from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) provides a robust collection of science-based, standards-mapped classroom resources. These resources were created to prevent vaping among middle and high school students.

The [Empower Vape-Free Youth™](#) campaign encourages middle and high school educators to speak with students about the risks of e-cigarettes and nicotine addiction. The campaign includes resources for educators to help students avoid or quit vaping.



Preventing tobacco use

A tobacco-free environment alone will not reduce initiation rates of tobacco use. Tobacco prevention education and evidence-based prevention practices are proven to reduce the onset of tobacco use. Programs should focus on skills training and not rely on traditional scare tactics with the “harmful” message.⁷

Most young people who vape want to quit. Suspending students who violate a school's tobacco-free policy is unlikely to help them quit tobacco use, and could alter their academic and future goals.

Because young people have been unfairly targeted with marketing tactics, the science of addiction, and long-term consequences of suspension, schools should provide a supportive environment and encouragement to quit using tobacco products, not suspension.

⁷ Schools Supporting Students to Quit Tobacco Use as an Alternative to Suspension: Lessons from the Field

Resources for school nurses

Toolkits

The [National Association of School Nurses Vanquishing Vaping Toolkit](#) contains information and resources to support school nurses in implementing evidence-based programs in their schools, including planning for sustainability and building collaborations with key stakeholders to successfully engage their school communities in tackling the topic of vaping head on.

The [Comprehensive Drug-Free Policy Guide for Schools](#) assists schools and districts in developing, communicating, enforcing, and supporting a comprehensive tobacco-free policy.

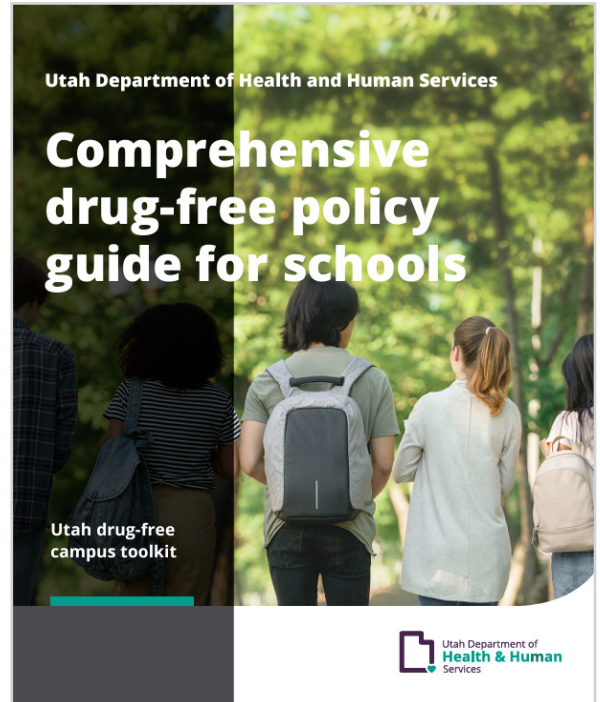
The [Tobacco Prevention Toolkit](#) and [Cannabis Prevention Toolkit](#) from Stanford Medicine are adaptable to the needs of educators and students. These toolkits contain modules that focus on e-cigarettes and vapes, nicotine dependency, and the impacts of cannabis use.

[Addiction Policy Forum - Vaping: Know the Facts](#) is a free, open-source toolkit that explains the harms associated with adolescent vaping and empowers audiences with the tools to take action.

Advocacy resources

The [Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids](#) works to change public attitudes about tobacco and promote proven policies that are most effective at reducing tobacco use and save the most lives through strategic communications and policy advocacy campaigns.

[See Through the Vape](#) is a campaign on vaping awareness. Educational resources include: facts on vapes being hazardous waste, information on proper vape disposal, and a discussion guide for parents to talk about vaping dangers.



Local health department contact information

Bear River Health Department

Phone: 435-792-6510
655 East 1300 North
Logan, UT 84341
brhd.org

Central Utah Health Department

Phone: 435-896-5451
70 Westview Drive
Richfield, UT 84701
centralutahpublichealth.com

Davis County Health Department

Phone: 801-525-5070
22 South State Street
Clearfield, UT 84015
daviscountyutah.gov/health/

Salt Lake County Health Department

Phone: 385-468-5348
7971 South 1825 West
West Jordan, UT 84088
slco.org/health/

San Juan County Health Department

Phone: 435-359-0038
735 South 200 West #2
Blanding, UT 84511
sanjuanpublichealth.org

Southeast Utah Health Department

Phone: 435-637-3671
28 South 100 East
Price, UT 84501
seuhealth.com

Southwest Utah Health Department

Phone: 435-673-3528
620 South 400 East
St. George, UT 84770
swuhealth.org

Summit County Health Department

Phone: 435-333-1505
650 Round Valley Drive
Park City, UT 84060
summitcountyhealth.org

Tooele County Health Department

Phone: 435-277-2300
151 North Main Street
Tooele, UT 84074
tooelehealth.org

TriCounty Health Department

Phone: 435-247-1177
133 South 500 East
Vernal, UT 84078
tricityhealth.com

Utah County Health Department

Phone: 801-851-7000
151 South University Avenue
Provo, UT 84601
health.utahcounty.gov

Wasatch County Health Department

Phone: 435-654-2700
55 South 500 East
Heber City, UT 84032
wasatch.utah.gov

Weber-Morgan Health Department

Phone: 801-399-7184
477 23rd Street
Ogden, UT 84401
webermorganhealth.org

Local prevention coordinators

Schools are encouraged to reach out to local prevention coordinators to assist with the creation and implementation of school policies. To find a local prevention coordinator, visit: <https://sumh.utah.gov/contact/location-map/>.

Contact us

Utah Tobacco Prevention and Control Program

Phone: 801-538-6141
288 N 1460 W, Box 142106
Salt Lake City, UT 84114-2106
tobaccofree.utah.org

My Life, My Quit

Phone: 800-Quit-NOW
mylifemyquit.org

way to quit 



Utah Department of
Health & Human
Services