

New Trend? Nicotine Pouches

While vaping continues to be popular among youth, there is a new trend that is quickly growing in popularity. It is an alternative to vaping that does not require batteries, charging, or accessories and cannot be detected by smoke or machines. This new trend is nicotine pouches. Nicotine pouches are similar to, and are based upon, the Swedish product, snus. It is very easy and discrete to use. To use



nicotine pouches is somewhat similar to chewing tobacco. You place the pouch between your lip and gums, then leave it there until the taste or nicotine has dissolved. You do not swallow the pouch, though, as it can poison you. Instead, you throw the pouch away in the trash or put it in the 'catch lid' which is a small part of the container that holds the pouches until you can dispose of them.

The popular nicotine pouches in the United States are mostly marketed as synthetic or tobacco free nicotine. These brands give a false sense of safety by saying they are tobacco free and by using words to describe it such as “clean” and “pure”. However, it is a well-known fact that nicotine, even if it is tobacco free, is harmful to the developing brain. It can cause a youth’s brain to not fully develop, which affects attention and learning, not to mention it also makes them more susceptible to developing a nicotine addiction or other addictions to alcohol or other substances.

Nicotine pouches have grown in popularity since their release in 2018. They appeal to youth, similar to vaping products, by having many different flavors, like spearmint or fruity flavors. Looking at only one brand, Zyn, their dollar sales in convenience stores had risen by 470% in only the first half of the year 2020. In 2019, it was reported that 42.3% of middle school students, and 49.8% of high school students, had used flavored smokeless tobacco products, like nicotine pouches, in the past 30 days. 34.1% of those students reported using these products for 20 or more of the 30 days.

As of December 2019, the United States set the federal minimum age to purchase products like nicotine pouches at 21 years old. Unfortunately, like vaping products, you can buy these products online with the simple click of a button. Although you are asked whether you are of legal age to make the purchase, no proof is required. These products can also be considered more affordable than vaping products. The product Zyn sells a pack of 10 cans that contain 15 pouches per can for only \$38.90, or \$3.99 for one can. The pouches ease nicotine cravings for on average an hour, however, it depends on the amount of nicotine that the pouch contains and the individual’s tolerance level. Zyn sells pouches that contain as much as 6 milligrams of nicotine per pouch.

Some popular brands of nicotine pouches include Zyn, NIIN, Velo, Grinds, Rogue, and On! These products are usually in circular, square or rectangular metal containers that resemble chewing tobacco or mint containers. A good way to determine if the package contains a nicotine pouch or mints/gum is to look at the can, because legally, there needs to be a warning label that the product contains nicotine. If you are still unsure what is in the container, inspect it more closely as these pouches smell like their flavoring and look like mints or gum. When in doubt, check it out.

Resources:

What is Zyn and What are Oral Nicotine Pouches

<https://truthinitiative.org/research-resources/emerging-tobacco-products/what-zyn-and-what-are-oral-nicotine-pouches>

Smokeless Tobacco: Facts, Stats and Regulations

<https://truthinitiative.org/research-resources/traditional-tobacco-products/smokeless-tobacco-facts-stats-and-regulations>

What you need to know about new synthetic nicotine products

<https://truthinitiative.org/research-resources/harmful-effects-tobacco/what-you-need-know-about-new-synthetic-nicotine-products>

New and Emerging Products that Can Get Kids Hooked on Nicotine

<https://drugfree.org/article/new-and-emerging-products-that-can-get-kids-hooked-on-nicotine/>

Helping Youth Manage and Cope with Strong Emotions

Emotional and psychological well-being is just as important as our physical health. Just as kids need adults to model and teach behaviors that lead to healthy bodies, it is equally important for parents and caregivers to help youth to develop skills to regulate emotions and cope with difficult feelings and experiences. Caring adults play an important role in nurturing a young person's ability to manage emotional responses and cope with adversity. This is especially important during a time when many children and teens are struggling with a sense of heightened stress.

Psychological well-being doesn't mean that we always feel happy or that we never go through hard times and experience difficult emotions. It is normal to experience disappointment, sadness, worry, stress, and feelings of not being okay. It is healthy for kids to experience an array of emotions. Sometimes those emotions are uncomfortable and hard to sit with, but learning to experience and cope with big emotions can build strength and resilience. Just as physical fitness takes time to achieve, developing skills for coping and managing emotions also takes time to learn and practice.

Experts in the field of psychology and behavioral health agree that all feelings are valid. There is nothing wrong with having big feelings, but how those feelings are managed is important. Self-regulation is a skill that can help kids and teenagers to understand and manage their behavior and reactions to feelings and things happening around them. Self-regulation can help youth learn that they can be in control of their emotions and learn to cope with their feelings in a healthy manner. A key to self-regulation is helping kids learn how to understand and accept their feelings. Adults can coach kids through this by putting a label on their emotion (i.e., you are feeling mad, embarrassed, disappointed, etc.) and then validate and relate to what they are feeling. We may not always understand why kids and teens feel the way they do, but parents and other caring adults can give youth acknowledgment that you understand they are working through some strong emotions and that that is okay. A second step is helping kids to understand that emotions and the way they feel in the "now" won't last forever. Developing coping skills to work through tough emotions can provide youth with a toolbox of strategies to manage feelings and handle stress.

Learning how to manage stress and deal with life's ups and downs is a process that continues throughout our entire lives. Helping youth develop coping skills includes identifying positive, healthy coping mechanisms versus unhealthy coping skills. Healthy coping skills relieve the intensity of the emotion, cause no harm to self or others and improve the situation. Unhealthy coping skills include things like verbal/physical aggression, self-harm, withdrawing or avoiding, excessive screen time, or drug and alcohol use. Examples of health coping strategies include:

- Deep breathing
- Exercise
- Practicing mindfulness

- Sleeping and eating well
- Engaging the five senses
- Journaling, drawing, coloring
- Sharing your feelings with someone you trust
- Asking for help
- Engaging in a hobby

Engaging in the following steps can help youth explore and develop healthy coping skills:

- Identify- What are things that bring the individual joy and comfort
- Practice- Engage in the activity/skill to become comfortable with it
- Implement- Use the skill in times of need
- Evaluate- How successful was I in utilizing this skill? Was it easy/natural to use? Did it decrease the undesired emotion? Did I like the outcome?
- Adapt- Make small or large changes to the skill; keep adding new strategies

Developing strong coping skills takes time and patience. Every coping strategy isn't going to work for every person and what works today, might not work tomorrow. Empower youth to practice many different strategies to help them explore what works best for them. If you think a child or teen is struggling to manage emotions or cope with difficult situations, it might be helpful to talk to a pediatrician or seek out help from a mental health professional to get extra guidance.

References: American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry; American Academy of Pediatrics; Boys Town; Child Mind Institute



Red Ribbon Week is October 23-31, 2021. Over the years, **Red Ribbon Week** has evolved in how it raises awareness regarding the need for alcohol, tobacco and other drug and violence prevention, early intervention, and treatment services. It is the largest, most visible, youth prevention awareness campaign observed annually in the United States.

Red Ribbon Week inspires communities and individuals to take a stand in protecting, promoting and cultivating the hopes and dreams of all youth through a commitment to drug prevention and education and a personal commitment to live drug free lives.

As we know, there are a multitude of reasons and circumstances that may lead someone down the path of drug use and addiction. Poverty, boredom, bullying, grief, depression, other mental health concerns are only just a few.

Here are a few examples of what schools and communities can do to help take a more active role in drug prevention efforts:

- Provide programming and resources to youth and their families who might be struggling with emotional, behavioral and/or mental health concerns.
- Volunteer to clean up a park or a neighborhood/community center. Take it a step further and raise money to purchase new equipment and games to be used in these parks and centers.
- Host a weekly game night at your school, community center and/or neighborhood at no cost to families. Raise money to pay for food, prizes and giveaways each week.

- Start and/or enhance a buddy and/or mentoring program in your school or community. Hold a ceremony to recognize the accomplishments of the buddies, mentors and mentees.
- Raise money to help pay for registration fees and other costs associated with youth activities, including possible travel costs, in order to make them accessible to more youth.

In addition, each year the National Family Partnership (NFP) holds a contest that individuals, schools and communities can enter that helps determine what the national **Red Ribbon Week's** theme will be. There are thousands of Red Ribbon Week theme ideas submitted each year by students, parents, school personnel and communities all across the country. The winning theme for 2021 is "Drug Free Looks Like Me." Marin Wurst, a 7th grader at Solon Middle School located in Solon, Ohio, was the winner.

NFP noted the chosen theme describes perfectly how each of us can and do make a difference by doing our part in keeping our communities safe, healthy and Drug-Free.

Many schools choose to center their **Red Ribbon Week** around the national theme but it's okay for a school to develop their own theme for **Red Ribbon Week**. Schools might even hold their own separate contests related to Red Ribbon Week among staff, classes and or individuals, which often helps create enthusiasm for Red Ribbon Week.

While the 2021 theme winner has been decided for this year, the 2021 **Red Ribbon** Photo Contest has not yet begun. The entry period for the **Red Ribbon Week** Photo Contest is October 1-November 1, 2021. There are multiple categories that schools, families and/or individuals can enter. Take a photo of your **Red Ribbon Week** decorations and activities (preferably include people in the photos) and then upload it to www.redribbon.org/contest-2021. Please note, you must be 18 years old to enter so parents, or for school entries, school staff or PTA members, must submit the photos. All winners will be announced on December 2, 2021. For more information, please visit <https://www.redribbon.org/contest>

For more general information about drug prevention and drug prevention efforts, please visit our website at <https://scipnebraska.com/>

<http://nfp.org> › news › introducing-the-2021-national-r...

<https://guideinc.org> › redribbonweek

<https://www.redribbon.org>

<https://scipnebraska.com>

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