

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/>