NICOTINE

Vapes, cigarettes and pouches: the facts, the real numbers, and how to use them.

Know the Basics

What it is

Nicotine is a highly addictive chemical found in tobacco. Vapes, cigarettes, cigars, chew and nicotine pouches all deliver it.

Not just water vapor

Vape aerosol can contain nicotine, metals like lead and other harmful chemicals. Some vapes hold as much nicotine as a pack of cigarettes or more.

A brain still under construction

Nicotine can harm the developing brain's control of attention, learning, mood and impulse control. Teens can become addicted quickly.

The stress trap

Withdrawal causes irritability, anxiety and trouble focusing. Vaping relieves those feelings for a while, so it can seem to help with stress when it's really feeding the addiction.

Pouches are nicotine too

Nicotine pouches sit between the gum and lip. "Tobacco-free" doesn't mean nicotine-free or risk-free.

THE REAL NUMBERS: INDIANA

94.7%
of Indiana students surveyed (grades 6–12) did **not** vape in the past month. Just 5.3% did.

8.2%
of Indiana 12th graders vaped in the past month, down from 28.6% in 2018. The decline is slowing.

74%
of 7th–12th graders who vaped in the past month used the vape for **nicotine**. Others vaped only THC or other substances.

Source: 2026 Indiana Youth Survey

Indiana & the Nation

Grade	Vaped in the past month		Smoked cigarettes in the past month	
	Indiana (2026) any substance	U.S. (2025) nicotine only	Indiana (2026)	U.S. (2025)
8th	**4.3%**	5.1%	**0.7%**	0.7%
10th	**6.1%**	10.0%	**1.1%**	1.1%
12th	**8.2%**	15.7%	**2.5%**	3.4%

Compare with care: these vaping columns don't measure the same thing. Indiana counts vaping **any** substance, while the national survey now reports **nicotine** vaping only. Indiana's numbers include THC vaping, so its nicotine-only rates would be even lower. Indiana figures come from the 2026 Indiana Youth Survey; U.S. figures come from Monitoring the Future 2025.

Laws & Safety in Indiana

- **21** is the minimum age to buy any tobacco or vape product, including nicotine pouches, in Indiana and nationwide.
- **Most teens who vape get it from a friend.** For 11th and 12th graders, gas stations and convenience stores come next.
- **Secondhand aerosol** isn't harmless. Bystanders breathe in nicotine and fine particles too.
- **Keep e-liquid and pouches away from kids and pets.** Swallowing even small amounts can poison a young child.

Ready to Quit?

This is Quitting: text DITCHVAPE to 88709 for free, anonymous support built for teens and young adults.

Quit Now Indiana: call 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669) for free coaching.

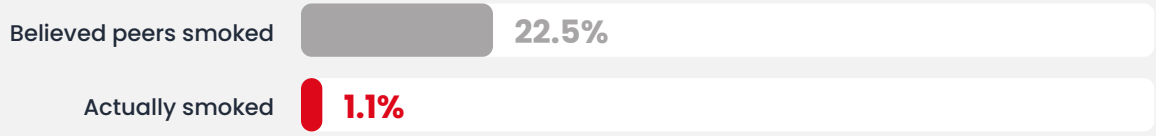
Nicotine poisoning? Vomiting, dizziness, sweating or a racing heart after swallowing e-liquid or a pouch: call Poison Control at 1-800-222-1222. Call 911 for a seizure or trouble breathing.

Using Data in a Norms Campaign

Social norms work when the numbers are accurate, local and believable.

When students believe "everyone vapes," they're more likely to vape themselves. Social norms campaigns close that gap by showing the healthy majority. That only works if the numbers are right. Students spot exaggeration fast, and one bad statistic can sink the whole campaign.

The Perception Gap: Cigarettes, Indiana 7th–12th Graders



Past-month cigarette use, grades 7–12 combined, 2026 Indiana Youth Survey. The survey didn't ask students to estimate peer vaping, but cigarettes show how far off perceptions can be: students guessed about 20 times the real rate.

DO

- **Lead with the healthy majority:** "More than 9 in 10 Indiana 12th graders didn't vape in the past month."
- **Use the most local, recent data you can find.** School data beats county data, and county data beats state data.
- **Match the data to your audience.** Use high school numbers for a high school campaign.
- **Name the source and year** on every message, like "2026 Indiana Youth Survey."
- **Test messages with peers.** If it doesn't feel believable, revise it.

DON'T

- **Spotlight the problem** ("1 in 12 seniors vapes!"). It can make vaping seem more normal.
- **Mix measures,** like "any vaping" and "nicotine vaping," or numbers from different surveys, grades or years.
- **Round in ways that change the meaning.** 8.2% is "about 1 in 12," not "almost 1 in 10."
- **Use national numbers when local data exist,** and always say "nationally" when you do.
- **Rely on scare tactics or shame.** They tend to backfire with teens.

Message Makeover

WEAK

"Vaping is an epidemic at our school!"

STRONGER

"Most of us are vape-free. More than 9 in 10 [School] students didn't vape in the past month."

[Insert your local number and source.]

Find Your Local Data

1. **Ask your school counselor or principal** whether your school took part in the Indiana Youth Survey. Participating schools get their own report.
2. **Contact your county's Local Coordinating Council (LCC)** or local prevention coalition. Many have county-level data.
3. **Visit inys.indiana.edu** for statewide and regional results.
4. **No local data?** Use state data and label it clearly as Indiana statewide.

Sources: Indiana Youth Survey 2026, Prevention Insights, IU School of Public Health-Bloomington; Monitoring the Future 2025, University of Michigan/NIDA; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC); U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA); Truth Initiative.