

Tobacco Health Bulletin: Emerging Products and Their Impact

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Tobacco use is evolving. Over the past decade, vaping surged as cigarette use declined. But youth vaping rates are now declining, and new products are gaining popularity. Some products contain tobacco leaf and others use only extracted nicotine — but all are classified as “tobacco products” by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.¹

Nicotine exposure increases the risk of negative health consequences — especially for youth — even in the absence of tobacco leaf or other additives.² Yet many new products are perceived as safe alternatives to cigarettes or vapes. This health bulletin covers four types of tobacco products, addressing (1) what they are, (2) their relative appeal compared to other tobacco products, and (3) the extent of their use.

NICOTINE POUCHES

What are they?

Microfiber pouches containing nicotine. Common legal brands include ZYN and VELO. Pouches are placed in the mouth to allow nicotine absorption into the gums. Used pouches are removed and discarded.³

Why are they appealing?

Viral, unpaid social media “Zynfluencers” have shaped perceptions that nicotine pouches are trendy, harmless, and fun.⁴ Paid advertising often promotes pouches as “tobacco-free” and “spit-free,” creating a contrast with tobacco leaf products and smokeless tobacco. Pouches can be used discreetly and often contain appealing flavors. They are also significantly less expensive than cigarettes, with a can of 15 pouches costing an average of \$4 to \$5.⁵

How widespread are they?

Introduced to the U.S. in 2016, use grew rapidly from 2023 to 2025. Prevalence rates are now closer to cigarette or vape use than any other tobacco product. People aged 19 to 30 have the highest rate of current use (9.5%), followed by 12th grade students (6.9%).⁶

OTHER ORAL NICOTINE PRODUCTS

What are they?

Nicotine gum, lozenges, mini-lozenges, toothpicks, tablets, and other orally absorbed products. Some oral nicotine products were originally developed as evidence-based smoking cessation tools.⁷ Use includes FDA-authorized smoking cessation brands such as Walgreens-brand nicotine gum and Nicorette products, as well as unauthorized brands such as Zippix and NICables.

Why are they appealing?

Oral nicotine products can be used extremely discreetly. Many are indistinguishable from non-nicotine products.⁸ Some products fully dissolve, leaving nothing to remove and discard. They often contain appealing flavors and are available in a wide range of doses.

How widespread are they?

In 2024, 1.2% of high school students reported regular use of one or more oral nicotine products other than nicotine pouches.⁹ Current adult use is unknown.



HEATED TOBACCO PRODUCTS

What are they?

Electronic devices that heat processed tobacco leaves to create an aerosol. Though they can look like vaping devices—which heat liquid nicotine compounds—heated tobacco products contain actual tobacco. Philip Morris’ IQOS is the only brand the FDA has authorized for sale as of February 2026.

Why are they appealing?

Use feels more like smoking cigarettes than other emerging tobacco products due to the aerosol’s greater similarities to cigarette smoke. The devices are designed and marketed as sleek, high-tech products.¹⁰

How widespread are they?

Heated tobacco products were introduced to the U.S. in 2019, but legal sales were halted from September 2021 to March 2025 due to a patent dispute. In 2024, 0.9% of high school students and 0.7% of middle school students reported regular use, even as the devices were not legally available.⁹ Current adult use is unknown.

SMOKELESS TOBACCO PRODUCTS

What are they?

Chewing tobacco, moist and dry snuff, snus, and other dissolvable products containing compressed or powdered tobacco leaf. Some of these products have been legally available for many years.

Why are they appealing?

Tobacco manufacturers have taken steps to “modernize” smokeless products by introducing appealing flavors and candy-inspired designs.¹¹ Smokeless tobacco products also allow for more discreet use than smoke- or aerosol-based products and can provide long-lasting nicotine delivery.

How widespread are they?

In 2024, 2.3% of U.S. residents reported daily smokeless tobacco use — down from the modern peak of 3.4% in 2015.¹² Use varies significantly by state, with daily use rates ranging from 0.4% to 5.7%.



More information on tobacco prevention
is available through the **PTTC Network**

NOTES

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