T21 Factsheet Citations

Updated January 28, 2020

- Approximately 95 percent of current adult smokers started before they were 21. (1)
- A 2015 report from the Institute of Medicine (IOM) found that increasing the legal age to purchase tobacco to 21 would decrease smoking initiation among 15-17-year-olds by 25 percent. (2)
- A Minnesota-specific study looked at the impact of raising the tobacco age and found that 25 percent fewer 15-year-olds would start smoking by the time they turn 18 and 15 percent fewer 18-year-olds would start smoking by the time they turn 18. This translates into 30,000 young people not becoming smokers over the next 15 years. (3)
- Evidence suggests that nicotine interferes with brain maturation and can have a long-term effect on cognitive development and mental health. (4)
- Even brief or intermittent nicotine exposure during adolescence can cause lasting damage. (5)
- The addictive properties of nicotine can lead adolescents to heavier daily tobacco use and a more difficult time quitting later in life. (6)
- Nicotine exposure can also increase the risk of addiction to other harmful substances. (5)
- The long-term effects of nicotine on the adolescent brain is a significant public health concern. (7,8)
- A 2014 national survey shows that 75 percent of adults favor increasing the minimum sale age for tobacco to 21. A national consensus is growing to protect young people from a lifetime of addiction and health problems caused by tobacco by raising the tobacco sale age. In addition, 70 percent of current smokers and 65 percent of those age 18-24 support raising the minimum tobacco sale age. (9)
- According to the 2019 Minnesota Student Survey, one in four Minnesota 11th graders reported using an e-cigarette in the past 30 days. This is a 50 percent increase from 2016. Additionally, 72 percent of 11th graders report getting e-cigarettes from friends. (10)

Sources:

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