

'Juuling' and Teenagers: 3 Things Principals and Teachers Need to Know

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A trendy product that has stirred concern among many child health advocates went undetected in many school hallways, bathrooms, and even classrooms when students first started using it.

The tiny device, called a Juul, looks more like a USB drive than what it actually is, a form of e-cigarette that allows students to inhale flavored nicotine vapor, often without detection by adults.

Here's what educators need to know about "juuling" (and vaping in general).

'Juuling' can be really difficult for teachers and principals to detect.

Students have become really crafty about concealing their vaping habits, principals told *Education Week*.

The device's flavor cartridges come in kid-friendly varieties like mango, creme brulee, and gummi bear. And the scents they give off are not always immediately recognizable to unfamiliar adults, principals say.

There's also a whole juuling culture online, where students share YouTube videos of how to hollow out highlighters to conceal the compact devices, and how to slide them up shirt sleeves. There are even covert videos of students taking quick puffs in the back of their high school classrooms. And some companies now market specially designed apparel that allow vapers to use their device while it is concealed in the drawstring of a hoodie or the strap of a backpack.

Students who vape may have never smoked a traditional cigarette.

The Juul, and other e-cigarette products, are marketed as tools to help smokers quit, and many adults who've smoked for years have picked them up for that purpose.

But there's evidence that many teens start vaping without ever picking up a traditional cigarette.

"It is crucial that the progress made in reducing conventional cigarette smoking among youth and young adults not be compromised by the initiation and use of e-cigarettes," said a 2016 U.S. Surgeon General's report.

In 2017, 5.4 percent of 8th, 10th, and 12th graders reported smoking a cigarette in the last 30 days, according to Monitoring the Future, a nationally representative student survey administered by the University of Michigan. Twelve percent of students said they'd vaped in the last 30 days.

Principals tell *Education Week* that the use of Juuls crosses demographic and social groups—and that some students who they would never expect to smoke cigarettes have picked up vaping without reservations.

Students don't always realize they are ingesting nicotine when they vape.

An April survey by the Truth Initiative, which advocates against tobacco use, found that 63 percent of Juul users ages 15-24 were not aware the product "always contains nicotine." And other vaping products are poorly regulated and labeled, sometimes containing chemicals like lead.

Anti-smoking groups have opened a new front on the war on teen smoking, campaigning against vaping in part out of fear that it will lead teens to pick up traditional cigarettes to feed their new nicotine habits.

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A [study published in the American Journal of Medicine in 2017](#), found that adults ages 18-30 who use e-cigarettes were more than four times as likely to begin smoking tobacco cigarettes within 18 months as their peers who did not use the devices.



Some researchers have spotted similar trends among younger users.

Concerns about addiction are why some principals have gone beyond disciplining students who are caught with e-cigarettes and Juuls, offering cessation programs and community education to make sure parents are aware of the trend.

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