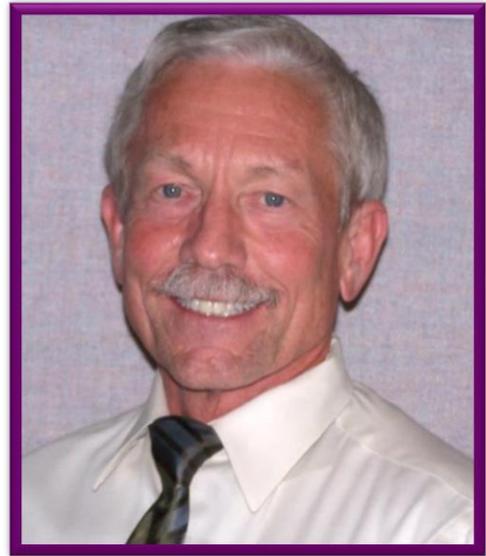


To *Your* HEALTH *Fresno County*

Bringing you public health issues and ways to improve personal, family, neighborhood and community health



The Cost of Smoking and Vaping– Part 2

December 19, 2014

Local stores play an important role in our communities. They help shape the economic liveliness, quality, and safety of local neighborhoods. The products that stores carry and promote also influence the health of the people who shop in them and the surrounding neighborhood.¹

In California, there are approximately 36,700 stores that are licensed to sell tobacco – this means that there is one store for every 254 children in our state.^{2,3}

In the United States, the tobacco industry is prohibited from advertising their products on television or billboards. As a result of this ban, the retail environment has become a key avenue for the tobacco industry to advertise and promote their products to the community at-large.

In 2008, the tobacco industry spent more than \$28 million each day on the advertising and promotion of its products in the United States. About 90 percent of this money was spent on promotions at retail stores.^{4,5}

Furthermore, stores in California that sell tobacco display an average of 11.1 cigarette advertisements (ads) and 5.4 smokeless tobacco advertisements.⁶ In Fresno County, a recent assessment conducted by the Fresno County Department of Public Health of stores that sell tobacco revealed that 48.0% of the stores displayed tobacco ads.

Storefront Advertising Impacts Young People

Research demonstrates that storefront ads for tobacco products such as, cigarettes, electronic cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, cigars, and cigarillos/little cigars can affect youth consumption behaviors. A study of California middle school students found that two-thirds reported at least weekly visits to stores that displayed tobacco advertising. These students were 1.5 times more likely to try smoking than their peers.⁷

Unlike adults, children do not have the skills and ability to understand when products are being marketed towards them.⁸

This is a concern because young people are more sensitive to nicotine and can become dependent sooner than adults.¹⁰ Research also shows that smoking during adolescence and early adulthood can lead to the early onset of heart damage as well as stunt the development of the lungs.¹¹

The availability of tobacco products and other unhealthy items at local stores also influences the purchasing habits of consumers.

The Rise of New Tobacco Products– Cigarillos aka little cigars

New products such as, cigarillos/little cigars and electronic cigarettes have completely changed the tobacco industry. In 2009, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) banned the production, importation, and sale of flavored cigarettes as part of a national effort to reduce youth smoking.¹²

To avoid the FDA's ban on flavored cigarettes, cigarette manufacturers altered their products so they would no longer be considered cigarettes but instead be categorized as flavored cigars.¹²

The outcome was the rise in popularity of flavored little cigars that are called cigarillos. Between 2000 and 2012, cigar consumption has increased by 124% compared to a 33.8% decline in consumption of cigarettes.¹² These products are particularly popular among young people.

This popularity is mostly due to the following reasons: 1) cigarillos/little cigars come in brightly colored packaging; 2) are available in a variety of flavors that appeal to young people (grape, cherry, strawberry, rum, pina colada, sweet, tropical fusion, etc.); 3) are located near the store checkout; 4) are sold in single units, and 5) are extremely affordable.^{13,14}

A survey of tobacco retail stores in Fresno County reveals that the average price of one cigarillo/little cigar was \$0.98.¹⁵

The survey also revealed that electronic cigarettes/vaping devices are becoming increasingly available at stores in Fresno County that sell tobacco products.¹⁵

The Rise of New Tobacco Products– Electronic cigarettes

Electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes) are battery operated devices designed to turn nicotine and other chemicals into a vapor that is inhaled.¹⁶ These products are often made to look like cigarettes and pens that come in a variety of colors. Many consumers consider e-cigarettes to be a safer alternative to cigarettes. However, clinical studies on the safety of e-cigarettes have not been submitted to the FDA.¹⁷ As a result, the unknown long-term health effects make these products dangerous to use.¹⁸

Although e-cigarettes are tobacco-free, most are not nicotine-free and contain a combination of flavorings, and propylene glycol.¹⁸

Studies have shown that short term side effects of e-cigarette use include: throat and mouth irritation, cough, nausea, and vomiting. Additionally, some users have experienced explosions and fires.²⁰

E-cigarettes have become largely popular with youth in recent years. E-cigarette experimentation and use doubled among U.S. middle and high school students between 2011 and 2012.²¹

In Fresno County, the use of e-cigarette devices by teenagers in schools has become a concern. Local school officials have found that teenagers aren't utilizing vaping devices to smoke marijuana. Teens are removing the nicotine solution and replacing it with concentrated marijuana oil aka hash oil.²²

Once the hash oil is vaporized through the e-cigarette, the smoke is virtually odorless.²²

The loose regulations of e-cigarettes, the unknown health effects, and the vaping of other substances through e-cigarettes can be detrimental to the health of people of all ages.

Local efforts are to promote healthier retail environments and restrict vaping

To help protect young people from the promotional influences of tobacco advertising the Fresno County Department of Public Health is providing technical assistance to local jurisdictions to adopt policies that reduce storefront window and outdoor advertising for stores that sell tobacco and alcohol. The Department is also working with local stores to increase access to fresh produce.

Local cities and the Fresno County Sheriff's Office are leaders in the movement to restrict use of e-cigarettes in Fresno County. In 2013, the City of Selma adopted a law that prohibits the use of e-cigarettes anywhere in the city where state law prohibits smoking.²³ Additionally, the Fresno County Sheriff's Office prohibits the use of e-cigarettes in department facilities and in County-owned/operated vehicles.

As a part of its internal efforts to improve the health of staff and consumers, the Fresno County of Public Health is in the process of developing an internal policy to prohibit the use of e-cigarettes in department facilities and in County-owned/operated vehicles.

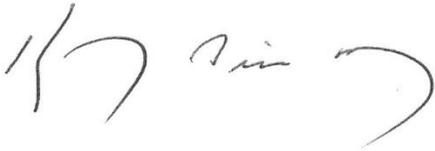
How to talk with children and teens about tobacco products and e-cigarettes

- Talk about the real facts. Young people are more likely to listen when you give them real and specific facts.
- Discuss the issue when you see people smoking on tv or vaping e-cigarettes in-person.
- Focus on the social issues related to tobacco use and vaping. Young people are more concerned about how smoking can make their hair, clothes, and breath smell more than any health risks.
- Look at advertising together. When you and your child see ads, talk about how tobacco and e-cigarettes companies need to attract new users and the methods they use to do so.
- Be direct, tell your child why you do not want them to smoke.
- Teach them how to say no. Teach your child how to say no when others may ask them if they want to try smoking or vaping.

If you smoke or use smoke-less tobacco, and/or vape e-cigarettes and are interested in quitting you can contact the Fresno County Department of Public Health Tobacco Prevention Program at (559) 600-6449 or visit www.fcdph.org.

I would like to hear from you. Email me at ToYourHealth@co.fresno.ca.us.

Here's to your health!



Dr. Ken Bird, Fresno County Health Officer

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