

BLOWING SMOKE IN PLAIN SIGHT

JUUL. Puff Bar. Suorin. STIIIZY. These are just a few of the e-cigarette devices packed with nicotine and THC that are finding their way into the hands of middle and high school students in the Beach Cities.

Electronic cigarettes, commonly called “vapes,” have been the most popular tobacco product among youth since 2014. Although the rate of Beach Cities youth who report using e-cigarette devices has declined since 2018, the percentage of Beach Cities 11th graders who vape is higher than both the Los Angeles County and California state averages. Thirteen percent of Beach Cities 11th graders report vaping in the past 30 days and 67 percent say it is “easy” to obtain them. Fueling this growth is the myth – among many teens and adults – that vaping isn’t harmful. This is far from fact. Vapes can contain high concentrations of nicotine – the same habit-forming neurotoxin in cigarettes – as well as an assortment of cancer-causing chemicals and heavy metals like formaldehyde, lead and acetaldehyde.

Another growing concern is the number of teens who report vaping marijuana or THC (the psychoactive ingredient that makes people feel “high”). Health professionals are watching this

emerging trend closely due to the negative health consequences associated with youth marijuana use coupled with those associated with vaping.

Further complicating matters is the fact that tobacco companies are designing vapes to resemble everyday school supplies like pens, highlighters and thumb drives. This helps kids vape in plain sight, in places like movie theaters and at home.

There is also a buffet of flavored “vape juices”, many with youthful names like “V’Nilla Cookies & Milk,” “Apple Candy,” “Bubblegum,” “Sticky Buns,” “Banana Ice.” On top of enticing underage clientele – the FDA prioritized enforcement of vape products that contain flavored “vape juice” (other than menthol) in 2020 citing youth appeal. As of recently, disposable vapes like Puff Bar have become youth’s preferred choice due to their menu of pre-filled flavors. Flavors also make the vapor emitted very difficult to detect as kids covertly exhale into their hoodies, sleeves or backpacks.

Vaping is a serious and growing youth health issue hiding in plain sight. It’s time we Talk About It. Learn more at bchd.org/talk.

California Healthy Kids Survey, 2021-22
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Electronic Cigarettes
National Institute on Drug Abuse, Monitoring the Future 2020 Survey Results
The New England Journal of Medicine, Disposable E-Cigarette Use among U.S. Youth – An Emerging Public Health Challenge

Can you spot the vape?



Did you know?
The number of Beach Cities students who “vape” **triples** from 9th to 11th grade.

(A, C, D, G, H, and I are vapes)