
First-of-its-Kind Text Message Quit Vaping Program, This is Quitting, Enrolls More Than 200,000 Young E-Cigarette Users To Help Them Quit
Truth Initiative® Marks Major Milestone Amid New Data That Show Nearly 40% of High School Students Vape Regularly, Pointing to Urgent Need to Help Youth Addicted to these High Nicotine Products

Washington, D.C. (Sept. 17, 2020) – [Truth Initiative®](#), the national public health organization behind the proven-effective [truth®](#) youth smoking, vaping and nicotine prevention campaign, today announced that [This is Quitting](#), the first-of-its-kind, free and anonymous text message quit vaping program for teens and young adults, is helping more than 200,000 young people to quit using e-cigarettes.

This is Quitting, which first launched in January 2019, was created with input from teens, college students and young adults who have attempted to, or successfully, quit e-cigarettes. The program is tailored by age group to give teens and young adults appropriate recommendations about quitting, and features tips and encouragement from other young people who have used the program. Preliminary data published in *Nicotine & Tobacco Research* showed after just two weeks of using This is Quitting, more than half of participants — 60.8% — reported that they had reduced or stopped using e-cigarettes.¹ Teens and young adults can text “DITCHVAPE” to 88709 and get immediate help. Parents of young people who vape can get support at [BecomeAnEX.org](#).

This significant milestone in engaging 200,00 young people in cessation treatment was reached as new data from the FDA and CDC show that while e-cigarette usage among youth is down, it remains at epidemic levels driven by a dramatic increase in the use of menthol and disposable e-cigarettes popular among young users.^{2,3} New data show 19.6% of America’s high school students are using e-cigarettes, nearly forty percent of whom (38.9%) do so on 20 or more of the past 30 days. Among current e-cigarette users in middle school, 20.0% also reported regular use; 22.5% of high school users and 9.4% of middle school users reported daily use.¹ Further, new e-cigarette sales data illustrate the popularity of menthol e-cigarettes (especially JUUL menthol pods) and inexpensive, flavored disposable e-cigarettes such as Puff Bar among youth, with the market share of disposable products nearly doubling in just 10 months.

¹ Graham AL, Jacobs MA, Amato MS. Engagement and 3-Month Outcomes From a Digital E-Cigarette Cessation Program in a Cohort of 27 000 Teens and Young Adults. *Nicotine Tob Res.* 2020;22(5):859-860. doi:10.1093/ntr/ntz097

² Wang TW, Neff LJ, Park-Lee E, Ren C, Cullen KA, King BA. E-cigarette Use Among Middle and High School Students — United States, 2020. *MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep.* ePub: 9 September 2020. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.mm6937e1>

³ Ali FR, Diaz MC, Vallone D, et al. E-cigarette Unit Sales, by Product and Flavor Type — United States, 2014–2020. *MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep.* ePub: 9 September 2020. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.mm6937e2>



Likewise, during this same period, pre-filled menthol cartridge sales known as pods increased from 10.7% to 61.8%.²

“The decline in youth e-cigarette use is good news but the deeper story is quite troubling,” said Robin Koval, CEO and president of Truth Initiative. “As the data show, the e-cigarette epidemic is far from over, with millions of our nation’s youth still vaping and doing so more frequently. Not only do we need to eliminate all flavors, including menthol, and put an end to cheap, disposable products that are largely aimed at youth, but it is critical that we provide the support needed to overcome addiction to young people who are now hooked on these high-nicotine products.”

The importance of helping young people quit vaping is underscored by a recent study from Truth Initiative, which found that young people between 15-27 who had ever used e-cigarettes in 2018 had seven times higher odds of ever using traditional cigarettes and eight times higher odds of currently using cigarettes one year later, compared with those who had never used an e-cigarette.⁴ The urgency is further compounded as many young people are going back-to-school during the coronavirus pandemic. Recent research from the Stanford University School of Medicine, young people who reported ever using e-cigarettes were up to five times more likely to test positive with COVID-19 compared to their non-vaping peers. Those who reported both e-cigarette and cigarette use in the past 30 days were nearly seven times more likely to receive a positive test result and were also almost five times more likely to experience COVID-19-related symptoms compared to those who had never vaped or smoked.⁵

In addition to providing innovative and effective quit smoking and vaping resources, **truth** is dedicated to delivering research-based prevention campaigns that give young people the facts about smoking and vaping. In January, **truth** launched the [Ready to Ditch JUUL](#) campaign, which was developed in response to young people using TikTok to show how to ditch their JUULs in unique and imaginative ways. The initial challenge had more than 1.8B views on TikTok and more than 365,000 TikTok user-created videos and helped young people nationwide quit vaping. Most recently, **truth** announced its [Vaping vs. Immune Systems with Dr. Rutland](#) campaign, which leverages the momentum around

⁴ Hair EC, Barton AA, Perks SN, et al. Association between e-cigarette use and future combustible cigarette use: Evidence from a prospective cohort of youth and young adults, 2017-2019 [published online ahead of print, 2020 Jul 31]. *Addict Behav.* 2020;112:106593. doi:10.1016/j.addbeh.2020.106593

⁵ Gaiha, S. M., Cheng, J., & Halpern-Felsher, B. (2020). Association Between Youth Smoking, Electronic Cigarette Use, and Coronavirus Disease 2019. *Journal of Adolescent Health.*



young people's own perspectives on their health during COVID-19 and works to change misperceptions about vaping. **truth** will also release a youth-led e-cigarette prevention curriculum for high school students in Fall 2020.

For more information about **Truth Initiative**, please visit, truthinitiative.org. For more information on This is Quitting, please visit truthinitiative.org/thisisquitting.

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