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**truth® Takes to TikTok To Talk Vaping And The Immune System During COVID-19**  
*[With research proving](#) increased risk of COVID-19 diagnosis for youth e-cigarette users, challenge inspires young people to get creative in boosting their [immune systems and offers resources for quitting vaping](#)*

**Washington, D.C.** (Sept. 28, 2020) – According to a new [Truth Initiative®](#) survey, nearly half of young people (49%) are more concerned about their health during the pandemic.<sup>1</sup> With this research in mind, **truth** is launching a TikTok challenge as part of its “*Vaping vs. Immune Systems with Dr. Rutland*” campaign to encourage people to get creative when it comes to boosting their immune system health. This latest anti-vaping effort from **truth**, featuring a physician known for his popular youth-focused approach, directly addresses misperceptions around e-cigarettes and the impact of vaping on the immune system during COVID-19.

The #ImmuneUpVapesDown TikTok challenge will ask users to come up with their own immune boosting concoction, record themselves drinking the immune boosting drink and share their reaction using the hashtag #ImmuneUpVapesDown. To encourage participation, **truth** is partnering with five TikTok influencers including [Demi Bagby](#), [Strawhat Dan](#), [Eitan Bernath](#), [Kelsey Shade](#) and [Boopyape \(Abe Yoon\)](#). The challenge will launch on Tuesday, September 29<sup>th</sup> and run through Thursday, October 1<sup>st</sup>.

[Vaping vs. Immune Systems with Dr. Rutland](#), which is currently airing across broadcast, digital and social networks, explains how vaping can damage lungs and weaken the immune system. **truth**, the proven-effective and nationally recognized youth smoking, vaping and nicotine prevention campaign from Truth Initiative, partnered with Dr. Cedric “Jamie” Rutland, a pulmonary and critical care physician at the University of California Riverside best known for his well-known youth-focused approach to sharing critical health information. Dr. Rutland [hosted an Instagram Q&A](#) where young people asked direct questions about vaping and its impact on their health.

This campaign comes at a time when recent data from the FDA and CDC show a dramatic increase in the use of menthol and disposable e-cigarettes. While new data reflect a decline in current e-cigarette use since 2019, 3.6 million U.S. youths still used e-cigarettes in 2020, and among current users, more than eight in 10 reported using flavored e-cigarettes.<sup>2,3</sup>

“During this time it’s more important than ever to keep our bodies healthy and our immune systems strong. I’m very excited to partner with truth to share the facts around e-cigarette use

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<sup>1</sup> Truth Initiative internally funded survey - online panel - August 10-13, 2020

<sup>2</sup> 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>

<sup>3</sup> 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>



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and encourage everyone to support healthy living,” said TikTok Influencer Demi Bagby. “I’m participating in the #ImmuneUpVapeDown challenge and using my platform to help end youth e-cigarette addictions.”

Overcoming nicotine addiction is difficult under normal circumstances, but especially during uncertain times like these. For teens and young adults looking to quit, This is Quitting is a first-of-its-kind, free and anonymous, text-based, quit vaping program from **truth**. More than 200,000 young people have enrolled since the program was first introduced in January 2019. Intentionally developed with input from young people, This is Quitting offers digital resources and messages from teens who have successfully quit. Preliminary data about the program published in *Nicotine & Tobacco Research* show 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. Teens and young adults can text “DITCHVAPE” to 88709 and get immediate help.

In addition to the new **truth** campaign and This is Quitting resource, **truth** will also release a youth-led e-cigarette prevention curriculum for high school students in Fall 2020.

For more information about **truth**, please visit, [thetruth.com](http://thetruth.com). For more information on This is Quitting, please visit [truthinitiative.org/thisisquitting](http://truthinitiative.org/thisisquitting).

**About Truth Initiative:**

Truth Initiative is a national public health organization dedicated to a future where tobacco and nicotine addiction are things of the past. We are inspiring lives free from smoking, vaping and nicotine through our rigorous scientific research and policy studies, our proven-effective and nationally-recognized **truth**® youth public education campaign, our community and youth engagement programs supporting populations at high risk of using tobacco products, and our innovations to end nicotine addiction by helping people quit. Our 20 years of lifesaving work has helped drive down the youth smoking rate from 23% in 2000 to a historic low of 3.7% in 2019 by preventing millions of young people from becoming smokers. We are equally committed to achieving the same results in ending the youth e-cigarette epidemic. Formerly known as the American Legacy Foundation, Truth Initiative was established and funded through the landmark 1998 Master Settlement Agreement, the largest civil litigation settlement in U.S. history, which resulted in tobacco companies paying states and territories compensation for tobacco-related diseases and losses to local economies. Truth Initiative is also contributing to ending the opioid misuse epidemic by sharing our expertise in youth and young adult education and prevention. To learn more, visit [truthinitiative.org](http://truthinitiative.org).

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