



***NOTE TO MEDIA:** We have experts in every region of New York State who can discuss youth cessation on a local level. Please see the Experts Database section of our Online News Room at <https://nysmokefree.com/newsroom> and contact us anytime to arrange an interview.*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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- *Parents can play a supporting role for help if their teen becomes addicted to nicotine*
- *Vape products often contain as much nicotine as a pack of combustible cigarettes*
- *The New York State Smokers' Quitline is one of many free resources to help teens and parents*

BACK-TO-SCHOOL COULD MEAN BACK TO NICOTINE ADDICTION FOR SOME TEENS

The New York State Smokers' Quitline offers free resources to help teenagers and their parents on a journey to become nicotine-free



Aug. 31, 2022 – With back-to-school season drawing near and COVID-19 protocols becoming less restrictive, teenagers will soon encounter more opportunities for socialization. This unfortunately could mean exposure to vape products, which often have high concentrations of nicotine and harm the still-developing brain. The **New York State Smokers' Quitline** (Quitline) wants teenagers and their parents to know free resources are available for learning how to overcome addiction to tobacco and/or vape products.

During a recent webinar hosted by the Quitline, titled, "Addressing Tobacco and Nicotine Use by Youth and Young Adults," the Quitline partnered with two top pediatricians and a representative from the American Academy of Pediatrics. Together, they discussed the challenges teens face with nicotine addiction and how both parents and healthcare professionals can offer support. Dr. Rachel Boykan, a clinical professor of pediatrics at Stony Brook University's Renaissance School of Medicine, explained that while overall prevalence

of tobacco product use has decreased among New York State teens, the frequency of use has increased. She said this creates a concern for potential long-term addiction.

“Teens are particularly susceptible to addiction; the brain continues to mature through about age 25,” said Dr. Boykan. **“If it’s hard for an adult to stop using nicotine products, it’s even harder for a teen.** Early data shows vape products – the most popular products among teens – are associated with symptoms of depression and anxiety, difficulty concentrating and sleeping, behavioral concerns, low self-esteem and impulsivity.”

Julie Gorzkowski Hamilton, director of adolescent health promotion for the American Academy of Pediatrics, warns parents that one “pod” or disposable vape cartridge can have as much nicotine as an entire pack of cigarettes. Once teens start using vape products regularly, she said, they may want to use them more and more.

“Many teens don’t recognize they’re addicted. Parents and healthcare professionals need to let them know they’re there for support,” Gorzkowski Hamilton said. **“Some pediatricians have found success offering a ‘two-week challenge,’ a strategy for teens who don’t think they’re addicted.** Ask them to try stopping for two weeks and see how it goes. If they have trouble, they may come back with interest in trying to quit.”

Dr. Sara Siddiqui, a clinical assistant professor of pediatrics at the NYU Grossman School of Medicine, noted that preaching to teens is often counter-intuitive. Instead, teens need education that tobacco and vape products do not relieve stress, but rather, add to stress.

“Children will need their parents’ support for help,” Dr. Siddiqui said. **“This is an addiction, and quitting is hard.** To parents, I say: your child needs you more than ever now.”

The Quitline posted the webinar recording, slides and a **youth and young adult cessation guide** at its [Online News Room](#). Additionally, the Quitline promotes a New York State-specific version of the Truth Initiative’s text-based intervention, [“This is Quitting.”](#) New York State youth and young adults can **text “DropTheVape” to 88709**; the program offers age-appropriate quitting recommendations for both 13-17 and 18-24 age ranges. Parents also can receive daily advice to help youth by texting “QUIT” to 202-899-7550.

The Quitline continues to provide coaching support seven days a week via phone at **1-866-NY-QUITS** (1-866-697-8487), through text messaging and online at nysmokefree.com. Most participants aged 18 and older are eligible to receive a free starter kit of NRT medications shipped to their home address, usually consisting of nicotine patches and/or nicotine gum or lozenges.

Today's youth and young adults face mental health challenges and peer pressure at seemingly every turn, and the rigors of school are taxing enough on their brains. The Quitline hopes teens never turn to nicotine products, especially due to the high potential for addiction and adverse health consequences. For those who are addicted and struggling, the Quitline is here to help. Healthcare professionals and parents, likewise, should offer support and encouragement as part of a journey to become nicotine-free.

About the New York State Smokers' Quitline

The New York State Smokers' Quitline is a service of the New York State Department of Health and based at Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center in Buffalo, N.Y. It is one of the first and busiest state quitlines in the nation and has responded to nearly 3 million calls since it began operating in 2000. The Quitline encourages tobacco and vape product users to talk with their healthcare professionals and access available Medicaid or health insurance benefits for medication support. All New York State residents can call **1-866-NY-QUITS** (1-866-697-8487) or text QUITNOW to 333888 for coaching and resources, free of charge, seven days a week beginning at 9 a.m. Visit www.nysmokefree.com for more information.

About Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center

Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center is a community united by the drive to eliminate cancer's grip on humanity by unlocking its secrets through personalized approaches and unleashing the healing power of hope. Founded by Dr. Roswell Park in 1898, it is the only National Cancer Institute-designated comprehensive cancer center in Upstate New York. Learn more at www.roswellpark.org, or contact us at 1-800-ROSWELL (1-800-767-9355) or ASKRoswell@roswellpark.org.

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