

Dear Parents and Guardians,

As part of your school's general health curriculum, your child will soon be participating in a research-based youth e-cigarette prevention program called *CATCH My Breath* at school. This program was developed by health education experts from The University of Texas School of Public Health (UTHealth) in Austin and is designed to help your child make healthy choices and avoid risky behaviors when it comes to e-cigarettes.

Most teens are curious about e-cigarettes. In 2019, about 28% of high school students and 11% of middle school students reported having used an e-cigarette in the last 30 days. In some areas, nearly half of high school students have tried an e-cigarette.

Most teens believe that e-cigarettes are safe. In reality, e-cigarettes contain nicotine and toxins, some of which are known to cause cancer. Nicotine is highly addictive, especially to a developing teen brain. What begins as experimentation can easily lead to a lifetime of nicotine addiction.

It does not take that long for young people to become addicted to **nicotine** because:

- E-cigarettes provide nicotine in doses as large as, or larger than, regular cigarettes
- Children and youth become addicted to nicotine much faster than adults
- Nicotine has more harmful effects on the developing adolescent brain, making it worse for kids than adults
- Nicotine is thought to be a social and biological “gateway” for the use of other substances, like initiating combustible cigarette use, alcohol, and other drugs.

Additionally, all states prohibit the **sale**, **purchase**, or **use** of e-cigarettes or liquid **nicotine** (e-liquid) containers by anyone under the age of 21.

Most states also prohibit e-cigarette use anywhere on school property or at school-sponsored events.

The CATCH My Breath program is disseminated nationally by CATCH Global Foundation with funding support from CVS Health. The program is also at the core of *Be Vape Free* ([bevapefree.org](http://bevapefree.org)), a youth vaping prevention initiative in partnership with the CVS Health Foundations, and Discovery Education.

Be sure to ask your child what he or she is learning in the program and what he or she thinks of e-cigarettes and cigarette smoking. As a parent or guardian, you have a lot of influence over your child's choices.

It is not always easy for parents and kids to talk about these topics together. Yet research has shown that when parents tell their teens not to use tobacco, they are much less likely to do so.

CATCH My Breath was created to give you a starting place for communicating about e-cigarettes with your child. CATCH My Breath is part of the family of CATCH healthy nutrition, physical activity, and oral health programs. To learn more about CATCH programs, materials, and training, visit the CATCH Global Foundation website at <http://catchinfo.org/>.

We hope that you and your family will find the program helpful. Please contact [catchmybreath@catch.org](mailto:catchmybreath@catch.org) if you have any questions about the program.

Sincerely,

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