

# Tobacco 21

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Grass Roots Prevention

Tobacco remains the leading preventable cause of death in this country and in the world. Tobacco use is a major factor in four out of the five leading causes of death

# Background

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- Tobacco use costs lives and money. Every year, almost 10,000 Missourians die from tobacco-related diseases. Missouri spends almost two billion dollars annually to treat smoking-related illness. Secondhand smoke causes an average of 1,150 deaths in Missouri annually.
- The smoking rate among high school students, at 14.9 percent, is also higher than the national average, although it is on a significant downward decline. However, when considering spit tobacco and other types of tobacco in addition to smoking, the rate of use among Missouri kids jumps to 31.8 percent.
- Missouri has one of the lowest tobacco taxes nationwide \$0.17 per pack.
- 75% of Missouri workers are protected by smoke – free indoor work site policies compared to 82.2% nationally.
- 38 cities and St. Louis County have smoke-free ordinances for workplace, restaurants and or bars.

# First Use

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The average age of first use of tobacco products (or smokeless) by youth in Missouri (6<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade) is **12.71** years compared to the national average of 13.94. (2016 Missouri Student Survey)

8% of Missouri high school students reported using tobacco before the age of 13 compared to 6.6% nationally. (Paige et al)

# Tobacco and Youth

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## Tobacco or Chew

- 10.6% of youth report tobacco use in the last 30 days
- 22.4% report any use over their lifetime
- 11% of high school students currently use tobacco products

## Smokeless products

- 6.2% of youth report use in the last 30 days
- 17.6% report any use over their lifetime
- 10% of high school students currently use smokeless products

# Risk and Access

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- 12.5% of Missouri youth reported “no or slight risk” if they smoked tobacco products
- 62.1% of Missouri youth reported “no or slight risk” with e-cigarettes
- 42.8% report it’s “easy” to get tobacco products
- 79.9% reported it’s easy to get e-cigarettes

Changing the social norm around tobacco and smokeless products will help reduce access and increase teen perception of harm. Because it is often difficult to stop smoking, preventing youth from ever starting to smoke is key to reducing tobacco use in Missourians of all ages.

# One Solution / T21

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St. Louis County will join Columbia Missouri, 18 metro Kansas City municipalities and local governments in 12 other states when the T21 legislation becomes effective December 2016.

In Needham Mass., the 5 year post T21 benchmark shows a 47% drop in teen tobacco use