

# ITYS Special Topic Report: Tobacco Use & Social Media



Tobacco Prevention  
and Cessation

August 2025

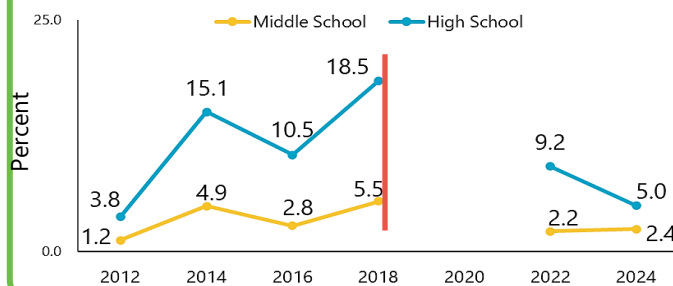
In 2024, the Indiana Youth Tobacco Survey (IYTS) was administered to middle and high school students across Indiana. The IYTS covers many tobacco-related topics including product use, secondhand smoke exposure, advertising, and beliefs about tobacco products. Data were collected on social media use among youth and exposure to tobacco ads or promotions.

## Current Tobacco Use Patterns Among Indiana Youth:

In 2024, 1 in 30 middle school students (3.4%) and more than 1 in 20 high school students (5.8%) reported current use of any tobacco product. E-cigarettes remain the most commonly used tobacco product, however there has been a significant decline in use since 2022 among high school students (from 9.2% to 5.0%).

While use of e-cigarettes is lower than it has been in recent years, youth are still susceptible to use of these products. Approximately in 1 in 5 middle and high school youth who have never used an e-cigarette are susceptible to using them.

Current E-cigarette Use Among Indiana Middle School and High School Students, 2024 IYTS



## Fast Facts

- **9 in 10** middle and high school youth reported **using social media**
- **1 in 3** middle and high school youth reported **using social media daily** (four hours or more per day)
- **Middle school youth** who use e-cigarettes were **3x as likely to report seeing ads for e-cigarettes** compared to those not using e-cigarettes

## Indiana Youth and Social Media

In 2024, approximately 9 in 10 middle school (88.8%) and high school (91.8%) students reported using social media. More than 4 in 5 (or 80%) of middle school and high school students reported using social media daily. Furthermore, 1 in 3 middle school (33.9%) and high school (34.7%) students reported using social media 4 hours or more each day.



**9 in 10** Middle and High School students reporting using social media.



**4 in 5** Middle and High School students reporting using social media daily.



**1 in 3** Middle and High School students reporting using social media four or more hours/day.

## Social Media and Tobacco Use

When looking at youth that report current use any kind of tobacco\*, we see similar patterns of social media use overall, with more than half of middle school youth (55.8%) reporting using social media four or more hours each day. Among high school youth who reported current tobacco use there was a significantly higher proportion that indicated they used social media four hours or more each day, compared to those not using tobacco (50.9% versus 33.7%).

\*Current Use of e-cigarettes is use of an e-cigarette on at least one of the past 30 days.

## Social Media and Tobacco Use (cont'd)

Similarly, among high school students reporting current use of e-cigarettes, more than half (51.7%) reported using social media for four hours or more daily, a significantly higher proportion compared to those reporting no e-cigarette use and using social media four hours more each day (33.5%).

Additionally, 7 in 10 (72.5%) middle school students who reported current use of e-cigarettes also indicated they use social media four or more hours daily, a significantly higher proportion than compared to those not using e-cigarettes, where only 33.8% reported using social media four hours or more daily.

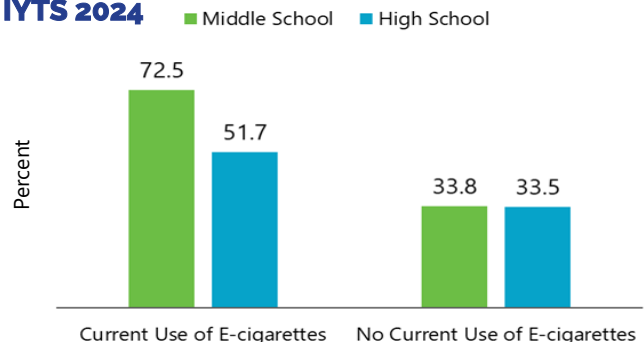
## Social Media and E-cigarette Use

With daily social media use being higher among those using e-cigarettes, these youth have more opportunities to see and interact with tobacco, including e-cigarettes related marketing and advertising. Additionally, even youth not using e-cigarettes can be exposed to e-cigarette advertising while using social media. As youth spend more time on social media platforms like Instagram, Tik Tok, X, YouTube, or Facebook they can be exposed to tobacco advertising, especially for e-cigarettes. The vast majority of youth, including those not using or those susceptible to using e-cigarettes are exposed to tobacco advertising in a variety of settings including online/social media, retailers, and on TV/movies, including streaming platforms.

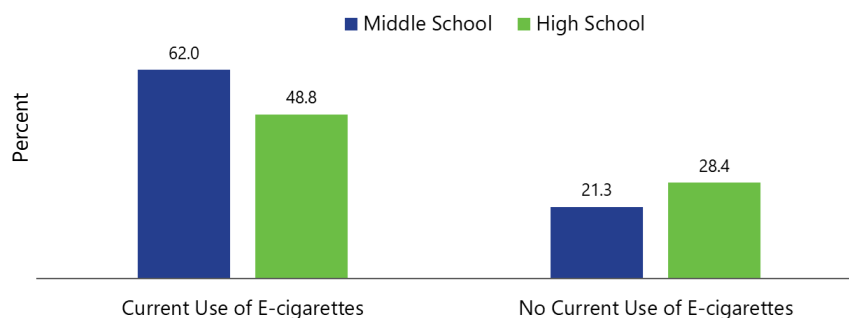
In 2024, students were asked whether they see posts related to e-cigarettes or vapes when using social media. When looking at just those students reporting use of social media nearly 1 in 5 middle school students and 3 in 10 high school students report seeing ads for e-cigarettes or vapes.

When looking at those who reported current use of e-cigarettes, more than half of middle school youth reporting use of e-cigarettes, saw ads about e-cigarettes or vapes on social media, nearly 3x what is reported among youth who do not use e-cigarettes. Nearly half of high school youth using e-cigarettes reported seeing ads about e-cigarettes or vapes sometimes, most of the time, or always, nearly 2x what is reported among those not using e-cigarettes. Similar patterns are observed for those reporting any kind of tobacco use. It is worth noting that those using e-cigarettes or other tobacco products may be more likely to see tobacco ads due to the way social media platforms show content. Algorithms determine content largely based on what a person engages with across social media and the internet.

**Middle and High School Students Using Social Media 4 Hours or More Daily, by E-cigarette Use, IYTS 2024**



**Middle and High School Students Report Seeing Ads about E-cigarettes or Vapes, IYTS 2024**



\*Current Tobacco Use is use of tobacco on at least one of the past 30 days.

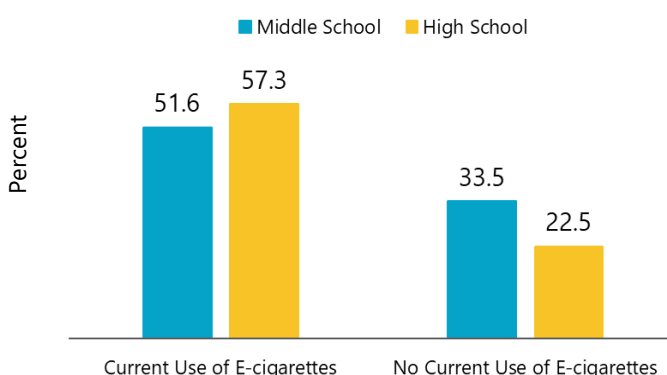
## Youth Exposure to Tobacco Advertisements and Promotions Online

The tobacco industry has a history of targeting youth, for example, by including ads designed to appeal to youth, giveaways, available flavors, and sharing content on how to conceal products<sup>2</sup>.

Youth exposure to e-cigarette advertising in general has been shown to reduce youth's perceptions of the harms of tobacco use and increase the likelihood of using e-cigarettes.<sup>3,4</sup> These same patterns are present when looking at e-cigarette advertising through websites/social media.<sup>5</sup>

Students were also asked if they saw e-cigarette ads or promotions while on the internet. Overall, 1 in 4 (23.5%) of middle school students and 1 in 3 (34.5%) high school students reported seeing e-cigarette ads or promotions online. Again, those who reported current use of e-cigarettes noted seeing e-cigarette ads or promotions at significantly higher rates compared to those who do not use e-cigarettes. More than half of high school students (51.6%) and middle school students (57.3%) who use e-cigarettes reported seeing ads or promotions online, a significantly higher rate compared to those not using e-cigarettes (33.5% and 22.5% respectively). Similar to how social media uses algorithms to inform the suggested content a user sees, online purchases and browser searches can inform the types of advertising a person may come across.

**Middle and High School Students Who See Ads or Promotions for E-cigarettes Online, IYTS 2024**



### What Can You Do?

Due to the tailored marketing of the tobacco industry, thousands of Hoosier youth continue to use e-cigarettes and other tobacco products and can be exposed to or influenced by social media and online advertising. Reducing youth tobacco use will require sustained efforts including:



Providing evidence-based assistance for youth to quit commercial tobacco, such as the [Live Vape Free](#), a youth-focused program which offers a texting program, and [QuitNowIndiana.com](#). Additional resources include [Ex Program](#), a Truth Initiative texting service for young people who want to quit e-cigarettes.



Encouraging youth to join Indiana's youth empowerment initiative, VOICE, which promotes and celebrates tobacco-free lifestyles. [VOICEIndiana.org](#)



Promoting **tobacco-free environments** including public spaces

**Note about 2024 Data:** The IYTS survey shifted from a paper and pencil format to an online survey (REDCAP) in 2020. However, even with an electronic survey, the COVID-19 pandemic still created unfavorable circumstances for data collection and representative data were not collected. In 2022 and 2024, the electronic format was used again. Because of this change in survey format, the ability to compare data from 2024 to previous years (2018 and prior) is limited; differences between estimates might result from changes in methodology (data collection), actual behavior, or both.

## Sources

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3. Tianze Sun, Giang Vu, Carmen C.W. Lim, Ben Johnson, Daniel Stjepanović, Janni Leung, Jason P. Connor, Coral Gartner, Wayne D. Hall, Gary C.K. Chan, Longitudinal association between exposure to e-cigarette advertising and youth e-cigarette use in the United States, *Addictive Behaviors*, Volume 146, 2023, 107810, ISSN 0306-4603, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.addbeh.2023.107810>.
4. Donaldson SI, Dormanesh A, Perez C, Majmundar A, Allem J. Association Between Exposure to Tobacco Content on Social Media and Tobacco Use: A Systematic Review and Meta-analysis. *JAMA Pediatr*. 2022;176(9):878–885. doi:10.1001/jamapediatrics.2022.2223
5. Cassandra A. Stanton, Keryn E. Pasch, Irene Pericot-Valverde, Raul Cruz-Cano, Meghan B. Moran, Melissa H. Abadi, Darren Mays, Melissa Mercincavage, Zhiqun Tang, Julia Chen-Sankey, Longitudinal associations between U.S. youth exposure to E-cigarette marketing and E-cigarette use harm perception and behavior change, *Preventive Medicine*, Volume 164, 2022, 107266, ISSN 0091-7435, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ypmed.2022.107266>.

For additional information on the Indiana Youth Tobacco Survey or commercial tobacco control in Indiana, visit: [in.gov/health/tpc](https://in.gov/health/tpc)



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