



Why Tobacco 21?

- Tobacco use remains the leading cause of preventable death in the United States, killing more than 480,000 people each year.¹
- 95% of adults who smoke had their first cigarette before the age of 21, and most before the age of 18.²
- The tobacco industry has a long history of targeting youth to recruit replacement tobacco users.
- Although Montana is seeing record low prevalence of cigarette smoking among high school students, one-third are still currently using tobacco products, with e-cigarettes being the most popular.³
- Nicotine exposure during adolescence is harmful to brain development.⁴

Tobacco 21 is the New Federal Law

On December 20, 2019, the President signed legislation raising the federal minimum age of sale of tobacco products from 18 to 21 years of age. It is now illegal to sell tobacco products (including e-cigarettes) to anyone under the age of 21. All retailers must comply with the new federal law.

Benefits of Tobacco 21

Keeps tobacco out of schools

- Three-quarters of 15 to 17-year-old current smokers obtain cigarettes from social sources.²
- Smokers aged 18 and 19 years old are often a supplier for younger kids who rely on friends, classmates, and peers to buy tobacco products.²
- Raising the sale age to 21 makes social source acquisition more difficult for underage youth.

Delays the age of initiation to prevent a lifetime of addiction

- Virtually all (95%) of adult smokers had their first cigarette before turning 21. Individuals who start smoking at younger ages are more likely to smoke as adults, and are also among the heaviest users.²
- With Tobacco 21, smoking initiation would be reduced by 25% for 15 to 17-year-olds and 15% for 18 to 20-year-olds.⁵

Reduces tobacco use

- If the minimum age were increased to 21 years of age, tobacco use would decrease by 12% by the time today's teenagers were adults and smoking-related deaths would decrease by 10%.⁵

CONTACT

Montana Tobacco Use
Prevention Program

Phone: (866) 787-5247

E-mail: infotobaccofree@mt.gov

Website: tobaccofree.mt.gov

“If a man has never smoked by age 18, the odds are three-to-one he never will.”

- R.J. Reynolds researcher



Sources

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Current Cigarette Smoking Among Adults in the United States. https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/fact_sheets/adult_data/cig_smoking/index.htm Accessed December, 2018.
2. Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids. Increasing the Minimum Legal Sale Age for Tobacco Products to 21. <https://www.tobaccofreekids.org/assets/factsheets/0376.pdf>. Accessed December, 2018.
3. Montana Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2019.
4. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. E-Cigarette Use Among Youth and Young Adults: A Report of the Surgeon General—Executive Summary. Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health, 2016.
5. Institute of Medicine. Public health implications of raising the minimum age of legal access to tobacco products. (2015). <https://www.nap.edu/catalog/18997/public-health-implications-of-raising-the-minimum-age-of-legal-access-to-tobacco-products>. Accessed December, 2018.
6. Winickoff, J. P., et al. (2014). Retail impact of raising tobacco sales age to 21 years. *American journal of public health*, 104(11), e18-21.
7. Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids. Raising the Tobacco Sale Age to 21 and the Military. <https://www.tobaccofreekids.org/assets/factsheets/0388.pdf>. Accessed December, 2018.

Busting the Myths

Tobacco 21 has little financial impact on tobacco retailers.

- According to a study published in the *American Journal of Public Health*, the economic impact of Tobacco 21 is minimal. Only 2% of U.S. cigarette sales go to those under the age of 21.⁶

The minimum age of military service does not equal readiness to enlist in a lifetime of nicotine addiction.

- Tobacco use is not a rite of passage or sign of adulthood. It is an addiction. The tobacco industry targets youth with their product to addict a new generation and replace smokers dying of tobacco-related diseases.
- The military recognizes the toll tobacco takes on troops. Service members who use tobacco have reduced endurance and are more likely to drop out of basic training.⁷
- One out of four military members smoke and about 36% started smoking after enlisting.⁷

Reporting Suspected Violations

Retailers suspected of selling tobacco products to individuals under the age of 21 can be reported to the FDA through their [online form](#), by calling 1-877-CTP-1373 or emailing CTPCompliance@FDA.hhs.gov.

MONTANA TOBACCO



Need Help Quitting?

- [Montana Tobacco Quit Line](#) – For help quitting tobacco, including e-cigarettes, visit quitnowmontana.com or call 1-800-QUIT-NOW.
- [Montana American Indian Commercial Tobacco Quit Line](#), visit MTAmericanIndianQuitLine.com or call 1-855-372-0055.
- [My Life, My Quit](#) – Youth (anyone under the age of 18) who need help quitting tobacco, including e-cigarettes, can text “Start my Quit” to 36072 or visit mylifemyquit.com.