

FDA should prohibit the sale of e-cigarettes to youth, and restrict flavors and visible vapors, and advertisements to protect youth from e-cigarettes

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FDA should prohibit the sale of e-cigarettes to youth

E-cigarette awareness and use rates among youth (grades 6-12) in the U.S. are increasing at alarming rates. The National Youth Tobacco Survey evidence suggests that e-cigarette use rates among middle (MS) and high school (HS) students have more than doubled between 2011 and 2012, with close to 7% reporting lifetime use in 2012¹. Our evidence collected in 6 schools in CT in Fall 2013 (4 HSs: $N=3614$; 2 MSs: $N=1166$) found that that awareness of e-cigarettes and rates of use were very high: 84.3% MS and 92% HS adolescents heard of e-cigarettes; 3.5% MS and 25.2% HS adolescents reported lifetime use of e-cigarettes; and 1.5% MS and 12% HS adolescents reported past month e-cigarette use^{2,3}. Among those who had never tried e-cigarettes, 26.4% of MS and 31.7% of HS students reported being susceptible to future use^{2,3}. Of great concern, adolescents who did not use cigarettes but used e-cigarettes were more likely to transition from using non-nicotine-containing e-cigarettes to nicotine-containing e-cigarettes (non-smokers 24.8%; ever cigarette smokers 7.2%; current cigarette smokers 6.4%)^{2,3}.

Not only do e-cigarettes appeal to non-smokers, adolescent smokers are particularly vulnerable to the use of e-cigarettes along with cigarettes^{4,5}, indicating that they may be using e-cigarettes to maintain cigarette smoking behavior rather than for smoking cessation. Relative to non-users, adolescent e-cigarette users are also more at risk for use of other tobacco products such as hookah and marijuana products such as blunts⁴.

In summary, existing and emerging data show strong evidence for the rise and widespread popularity of e-cigarette use among youth. This growing popularity is concerning from a public health perspective and could potentially undermine significant advances made toward reducing tobacco use among youth in the U.S. If left unregulated, a generation of nicotine addicted youth may emerge. Recognizing the critical need to protect the youth from e-cigarettes, 38 states to-date prohibit the sales of e-cigarettes or vaping/alternative tobacco products to adolescents under 18 years old⁶. However, the sale of e-cigarettes to minors is unregulated at the federal level. The FDA should join the swift movements made by the majority of the states and restrict the sale of e-cigarettes to youth.

FDA should restrict e-cigarette flavors and visible vapor, which appeal to youth

The wide availability of e-cigarette flavors, including candy-like flavors entice youth to use e-cigarettes. Even e-cigarette companies recognize the role of flavors on sales, and companies like NJOY have turned to selling flavored e-cigarettes to maintain its market share⁷.

There are currently 7,000 e-cigarette flavors available and 250 new flavors are being introduced monthly⁷.

Adolescents^{8,9} and young adults⁹ have very favorable perceptions of e-cigarette flavors and commonly cite flavors as a reason for initiation^{10,11}. Our evidence suggests that among adolescent and young adult e-cigarette users ($N=1157$) the availability of appealing flavors was one of the top three reasons (43.8%) for initiation of e-cigarette use¹¹. With respect to the type of flavors used, most e-cigarette users reported trying (70.7%) and preferring (56.8%) sweet flavors. Menthol and tobacco flavors were mostly preferred by adolescents who were already cigarette smokers (menthol: non-smokers 3.5%, ever cigarette smokers 5.5%, current cigarette smokers 18.6%; tobacco: non-smokers 0.5%, ever cigarette smokers 2.4%, current cigarette smokers: 7.1%)^{2,3}. Considering the importance of flavors on e-cigarette initiation among youth, FDA should prohibit e-cigarette flavors that may appeal to youth.

The FDA should also consider means of prohibiting visible vapors in e-cigarettes. Our evidence suggests that the ability to do “smoke tricks” using vapors that are odorless and perceived as healthier than cigarette smoke is attractive to youth¹¹. The popularity of “smoke tricks” can be seen on the Internet as well. For instance, popular e-cigarette forums discuss tips on which e-cigarette products to use and how to manipulate the products to produce vapors suitable for “smoke tricks” or “cloud chasing,” which is exhaling the densest and biggest clouds of smoke (Figure 1). A search of “smoke tricks e-cigs” on YouTube resulted in 103,000 tutorials video clips on how to do “smoke tricks” (Figure 2). Developing methods of prohibiting visible vapors may lower the appeal of e-cigarette use among youth.

FDA should restrict e-cigarette marketing

E-cigarettes are being marketed aggressively in the U.S. through a variety of mass media outlets, including popular social media (e.g., YouTube, Twitter). Marketing emphasizes the appealing flavors, promotes the product as healthier and safer alternative to cigarettes, and uses celebrities to promote the sales^{12,13}. These strategies may be particularly appealing to youth. Our qualitative evidence obtained through focus groups with MS, HS, and college students (18 groups, total students=127) in CT found that the most common advertisement themes that youth report having seen are the claims that e-cigarettes are healthier than cigarettes and are more convenient to use than cigarettes, both of which can be very appealing to this age group¹⁴. Overall, youth perceived e-cigarette advertisements as appealing and pleasant and described them as “cool,” “sleek” and “colorful”¹⁴. Our survey data obtained in Fall 2013 with MS ($N=1166$) and HS students ($N=3614$) showed that 70% of MS and 61% of HS adolescents in CT reported seeing e-cigarette advertisements in multiple locations, with television and gas stations being the primary locations^{2,3}. The FDA should restrict e-cigarette advertisement content and location that attract youth.

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Figure 1: An example of “cloud chasing” on a common e-cigarette forum. www.vaportalk.com/forum/forum/334-cloud-chasing/. Accessed: August 2014.

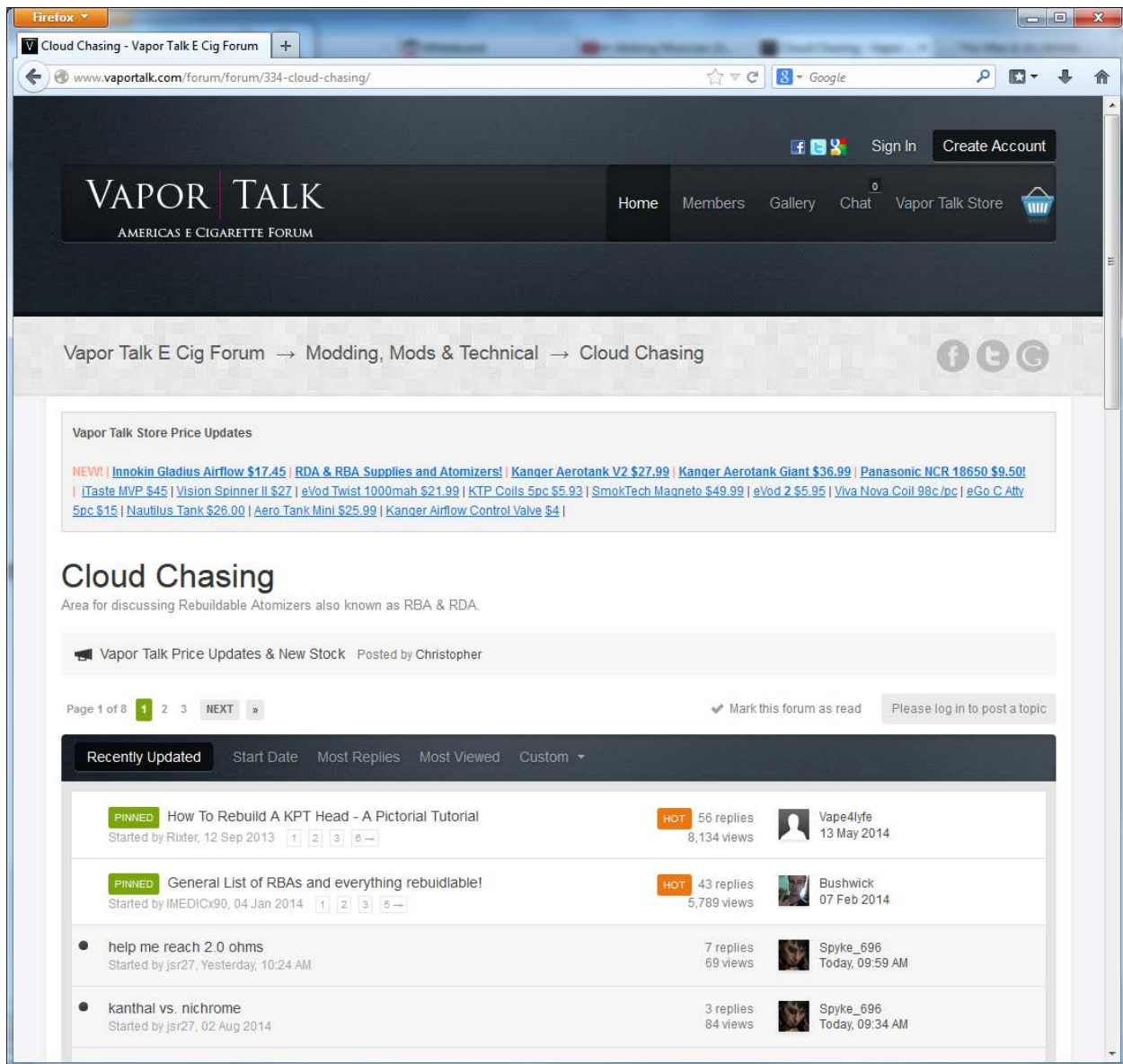


Figure 2: YouTube tutorials on “smoke tricks”. www.youtube.com. Accessed: July 2014

Firefox

smoke tricks e cig - YouTube

https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=smoke+tricks+e+cig

Google

YouTube

smoke tricks e cig

Upload Sign in

Filters About 103,000 results

E-cigarette smoke tricks compilation
by Michal Jag · 10 months ago · 389,013 views
My own electric cigarette smoke tricks compilation Music: Łąki Łan - Jammin.
HD 3:29

Cool E Cig [No Nicotine] Smoke Tricks Tutorial
by Michael Lammers · 10 months ago · 107,976 views
Thank you guys so much for making this is most popular smoke trick tutorial on youtube! You really don't realize how much this ...
7:56

Best Smoke Trick Vines (best smoke rings and tricks)
by Easy Breeze · 10 months ago · 4,882,794 views
<https://www.facebook.com/easybreezelife> Hey guys check us out on FBI! shoot us a follow! And Instagram at "easybreezevapor" ...
3:44

Viper Labs: E-Cig Smoke Tricks
by Mark Jhun Bautista · 1 year ago · 20,341 views
2:23

Easy smoke tricks
by Sam Khalif · 1 year ago · 142,054 views
JUST UPLOADED EASY SMOKE TRICKS 2 ON MY CHANNEL. Follow on : Instagram : samkushkush Gresham OR!
HD 2:20

fun with e cigs smoke tricks
by matthew schein · 2 years ago · 29,107 views
just me being bored.
5:37

Ultimate Smoke Tricks 2013 | *NEW*
by Always 420 Time · 1 year ago · 317,734 views
Subscribe Here Please. It's FREE! @ <http://goo.gl/mpBMAZ> CHECK OUT MY AMAZING CLOTHING LINE ...
6:37

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fj6MjDFD1Kw>