

NJ 101.5 FM Radio

E-Cigarettes: More Harm Than Good? [AUDIO]

By **Dino Flammia** September 23, 2013 5:36 AM

The use of electronic cigarettes has doubled among U.S. high school students, according to a **recent report**, and health advocates say the battery-powered devices could be leading today's youth down the wrong path.

Researchers at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Food and Drug Administration said e-cigarette experimentation and regular use among students jumped to 10 percent in the past year. A large number of these students had never tried a traditional cigarette before, creating the biggest concern among health professionals.

Karen Blumenfeld, Executive Director of Global Advisors on Smokefree Policy, said an e-cigarette is a nicotine-delivery device, and it could lead teens to regular cigarettes and cigars.

"And cigarettes have long been deemed a gateway to other types of drugs," Blumenfeld added.

The fear is that electronic cigarettes, marketed as a way to help smokers quit, could be doing the exact opposite.

According to the **FDA website**, consumers of e-cigarette products currently have no way of knowing whether e-cigarettes are safe for their intended use, if there are any benefits associated with the product, and how much nicotine or other potentially-harmful chemicals are being inhaled during usage.

Blumenfeld also expressed frustration with the fact that e-cigarettes are available in a variety of youth-friendly flavors. The federal government bans flavors among traditional cigarettes, with the exception of menthol. In addition, unlike a pack of Marlboro or Newport, e-cigarettes can be placed right on store counters for customers to grab.

"It's not a surprise, unfortunately, that teens may be attracted to using this product," Blumenfeld said. "There's no regulation by the government regarding advertising and marketing of these products."

The FDA has stated its intent to issue a proposed rule that would extend their regulations to electronic nicotine products.

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