



## Evidence: Young People and Smoking

### Reasons associated with young people starting smoking

Most adult smokers started as teenagers. Two-thirds of them take up smoking, and 40% are regularly smoking, before the age of 18<sup>1</sup>. Young people are four times more likely to start smoking if they are exposed to smoking within the home through living with carers, parents or siblings who smoke<sup>2,3</sup>.

Peers are also influential in smoking initiation. Data from 2021 indicated that 99% of regular smokers report friends who smoked compared to 33% of non-smokers, and 75% of regular smokers had family and friends who smoked compared to 55% of non-smokers.<sup>4</sup>

There are a wide range of other additional risk factors for starting smoking including ease of obtaining cigarettes<sup>5</sup>, socioeconomic status<sup>6</sup>, adverse childhood experiences<sup>7</sup>, exposure to tobacco marketing<sup>8,9</sup> and depictions of smoking in films, television and other media<sup>9,10</sup>.

Smoking in young people is also associated with several other factors, the strongest was using a vape (e-cigarette), followed by drug use (multiple drug use is more common than smoking alone), and then having friends who smoke<sup>11</sup>.

## References

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