

Point of Sale Advertising Targeting Teens

According to a new study published in the May issue of the Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine, point of sale advertising, lower cigarette prices, and high levels of promotions increase the likelihood of teen smoking. This information is not new to tobacco control advocates. Previous studies indicated a similar relationship between the amount of tobacco advertising teens are exposed to and initiation of tobacco use.

Studies have shown that children are twice as likely as adults to recall tobacco advertising and that teens are more likely to be influenced to smoke by cigarette advertising than by peer pressure. Since tobacco billboards were banned, cigarette companies have increased their advertising and promotion in and around retail outlets such as convenience stores. According to the Point of Purchase Advertising Institute, three out of four teenagers shop at a convenience store at least once a week.

Reducing youth exposure to tobacco advertising and promotion is an important component of decreasing youth initiation of tobacco use. Retailers can sell tobacco products to adult smokers without advertising to youth.

Steps to reduce youth exposure to tobacco advertising include: eliminating outdoor advertisements, especially at stores near schools, parks and playgrounds; reducing the amount of tobacco advertisements seen by youth by making tobacco displays smaller or less visible; and rearranging tobacco displays that currently sit near candy, toys or other youth related products.

Addiction to tobacco products make youth susceptible to respiratory problems, reduced immune function, and pre-cancerous gene mutations. Long term effects of smoking are well documented including lung and other cancers, heart disease and emphysema.

Help protect our youth from tobacco industry and promotion. Talk to retailers in your neighborhood about eliminating, reducing or rearranging tobacco advertising.

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