

# Know the Risks: Asthma and Tobacco

Students with asthma experimenting with or using tobacco products may experience:

- worsening lung function
- increased asthma symptoms
- poor asthma control
- trips to the hospital or emergency room
- missed school days

Although cigarette use is declining, e-cigarette use is at epidemic levels.<sup>1</sup>



Approximately **40%** of students **believe** there was **low or no risk** of negative health effects from e-cigarette use.<sup>2</sup>

## Illinois Middle and High School Student Tobacco Use Profile<sup>3</sup>



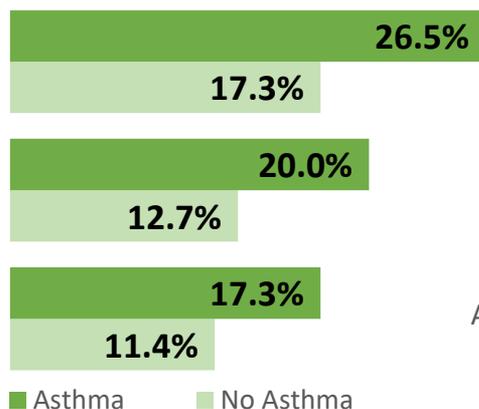
**12.9%** have **current asthma**.

**22.3%** of those with asthma had an **asthma attack** in the past year.

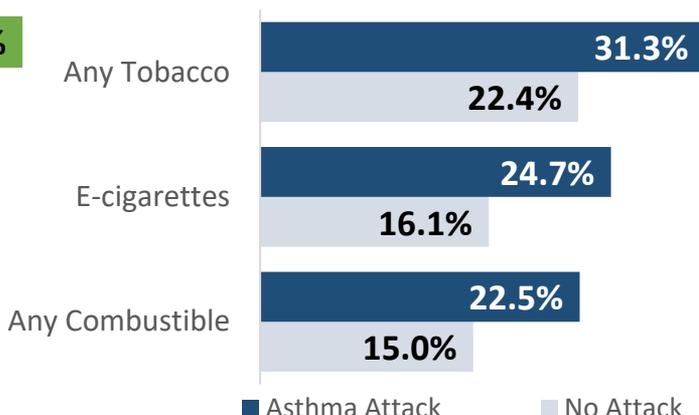


**18.5%** of students have **used any tobacco product** in the past month.  
**12.2%** used **any combustible** product.  
**13.6%** used **e-cigarettes**.

**More students with asthma are using tobacco products** compared to students without asthma.<sup>4</sup>



**More students with asthma using tobacco are having asthma attacks** compared to students with asthma who do not use tobacco.<sup>4</sup>



**Not using any kind of tobacco protects students with asthma from having an asthma attack.**<sup>5</sup>

## What to do?

### Talk to students with asthma

- Provide education on triggers, e-cigarettes, and harms from tobacco product use.
- Promote smoking cessation resources to students and their families.

**Support policies** which reduce youth access to tobacco products.

Definitions and sources on back page.

Created by the Asthma Program and Illinois Asthma Partnership Data and Surveillance Workgroup  
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## Definitions

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Current asthma: defined by a positive response to “Has a doctor, nurse, or other health professional ever told you that you have asthma?” and to “Do you still have asthma?”

Any tobacco product: defined as use of any tobacco product (e-cigarettes, cigarettes, cloves cigarettes, cigars, smokeless tobacco, pipe tobacco, and/or bidis) on at least one day in the past 30 days.

Any combustible product: defined as use of cigarettes, cloves, cigars, pipe tobacco, and/or bidis on at least one day in the past 30 days.

Asthma attack: defined “During the past 12 months, have you had an episode of asthma or asthma attack?”

## Sources

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<sup>1</sup>U.S. Federal Drug Administration, Youth E-cigarette Prevention Campaign Press Release, <https://www.fda.gov/NewsEvents/Newsroom/PressAnnouncements/ucm620788.htm>

<sup>2</sup> University of Illinois Urbana Champaign, Center for Prevention Research and Development, Illinois Youth Survey, 2018

<sup>3</sup>Illinois Youth Tobacco Survey, Illinois Department of Public Health, 2015

<sup>4</sup>Rao-Scott chi-square test; p value <0.05

<sup>5</sup>Based on an adjusted prevalence ratio; p value <0.05