

# 21 is the new 19



Why increasing the legal age to purchase tobacco will help decrease its use.



Research tells us that the adolescent brain is vulnerable; the earlier in life someone starts smoking, the more likely they are to become addicted and to keep smoking for longer.

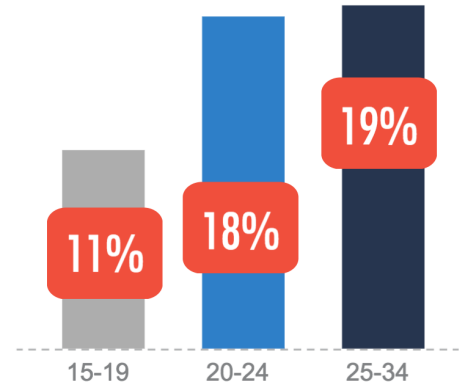
Traditional tobacco prevention initiatives have targeted those under the age of 19.

More and more in Canada, people are starting to smoke at a later age. Smoking rates begin to peak in the 20-24 age range and continue to rise through the 25-34 age bracket.

Many smokers transition to regular, daily use after the age of 18. The Tobacco Industry has a big focus on this age group:

"... 18 to 24 year olds will be [c]ritical to long term brand vitality as consumption increases with age."  
- Philip Morris USA (2006)

## Smoking Rates in Canada



72% of youth in grades 6-12 accessed cigarettes through social sources.

Tobacco is generally accessible to youth in the 15-18 age bracket as they have social networks with friends that can legally purchase tobacco.

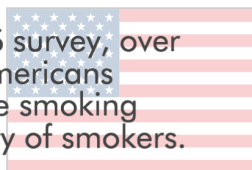
Restricting tobacco sales to those above the age of 21 would limit the amount of youth having access to tobacco through social connections.

The US Institute on Medicine (IOM) reports that raising the legal age to purchase tobacco would help delay the age that people start to smoke. This would help decrease smoking rates and would have immediate benefits for youth and young adults.

The IOM estimates that in the US, increasing the legal age to purchase tobacco to 21 would decrease smoking by 12% over the next 85 years and even more if the age was increased to 25.

Recently, Hawaii became the first US state to increase the minimum legal age to buy tobacco to 21. It joins over 90 local US municipalities and regions that have also raised the age.

According to a 2013 US survey, over two-thirds (70.5%) of Americans supported increasing the smoking age, including a majority of smokers.



The legal age to purchase tobacco in Canada varies by province from 18-19. It was first set as a federal minimum of 16 in 1908 and then 18 in 1988.

In Canada, a policy to increase in the legal age to purchase tobacco could happen at the provincial or federal level.

