

# Get Ready for Tobacco 21!

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Lee's Summit is about to get healthier! Starting December 1, 2016, it will be illegal to sell or provide tobacco (including cigarettes, cigars and chewing tobacco), electronic cigarettes, and related products to anyone under the age of 21. It will also be illegal for an individual to purchase these products before turning 21.



Why is the Tobacco 21 Law so important?

This law will reduce the risk of our young people developing a lifelong nicotine addiction. Studies show that 95% of smokers had their first cigarette before the age of 21. Most high school age smokers obtain their cigarettes from an older sibling or friend in the 18-20 year age group. (Most high school seniors turn 18 before graduation. This group is a primary supplier of tobacco and vapor products for younger students.) If a person hasn't started smoking by the age of 21, they are extremely unlikely to develop a tobacco habit.

Add to all of this the fact that the frontal lobe of the brain is still developing during these young years and you have a "perfect storm" of poor impulse control, peer pressure susceptibility, and vulnerability to nicotine addiction.

Long-term smokers suffer a far greater incidence of chronic illnesses and premature death than non-smokers. If we can prevent this from happening to our young people, then why would we not do so?

Why are e-cigs and other “vapor products” included?

Vapor products such as electronic cigarettes are included in this ordinance because their use can lead to nicotine addiction and eventual dependence upon tobacco products such as cigarettes and cigars. The number of young people starting to “vape” is increasing at an alarming rate.

Who supported passage of a Tobacco21 Ordinance?

The Lee’s Summit Health Education Advisory Board officially presented the “Tobacco 21” concept proposal to the City Council, along with broad support from the community. The supporting coalition included: The Lee’s Summit Chamber of Commerce; Lee’s Summit Cares and the Lee’s Summit Cares Youth Advisory Board; the LS R7 School Board; and local healthcare groups including Lee’s Summit Medical Center, St. Luke’s East – Lee’s Summit, Truman Medical Center – Lakewood, John Knox Village, Rediscover, and the Jackson County Health Department. There was also strong support from other communities around the KC Metro area, as well as the Healthcare Foundation of Greater Kansas City and the Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce.

So far, 19 communities (with a combined population of almost 1.4 million people!) in the greater Kansas City area have passed Tobacco 21 laws.

Excerpts from Lee’s Summit’s Tobacco 21 law:

- It shall be unlawful for any person to sell or distribute any tobacco products, alternative nicotine products or vapor products to persons under the age of twenty-one or allow such sale or distribution.
- It shall be unlawful for any person under the age of twenty-one to purchase any tobacco products, alternative nicotine products or vapor products.
- It shall be unlawful for any person under the age of eighteen to knowingly possess or use any tobacco products, alternative nicotine products or vapor products.

This law was passed by the Lee’s Summit City Council by a 7-0 vote on August 18, 2016, and was then signed by Mayor Rhoads. It goes into effect December 1.

What if I am age 18-20 and am already addicted to nicotine?

It is in your best health interest to quit smoking and/or vaping. Anyone age 18 or older may still purchase FDA-approved over-the-counter smoking cessation aids such as nicotine patches or gum. (Under age 18, these require a doctor’s prescription.) Check out the American Lung Association “Stop Smoking” link below.

Learn more at:

<http://www.cityofls.net/City-of-Lees-Summit/Codes-and-Neighborhood->

Services/Tobacco-21

<http://www.lung.org/stop-smoking/>

<https://www.facebook.com/LeesSummitHEAB/>

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