

Raising Legal Smoking Age to 21 Works

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FRIDAY, Aug. 9, 2019 (HealthDay News) -- Parts of the United States that raised the legal age to buy tobacco from 18 to 21 have seen significant reductions in cigarette smoking among young adults.


Compared to other regions, those with tobacco-21 laws had a 39% decline in regular smoking among 18- to 20-year-olds who had previously experimented with cigarettes, a new study found.

In that age group, the reduction was even larger (50%) among those whose close friends smoked at age 16, according to the study published recently in the journal *Addiction*.

"This research indicates that a 'social multiplier' effect may amplify the impact of tobacco-21 laws," said lead author Abigail Friedman, an assistant professor at the Yale School of Public Health in New Haven, Conn.

"As peer smoking is a critical predictor of youth smoking, this study suggests that tobacco-21 laws may help reduce smoking among those most susceptible to tobacco use," she said in a Society for the Study of Addiction news release. "This result supports raising the age of sale to 21 as a means to reduce young adult smoking and improve public health."

As of June, 16 states and more than 400 localities had adopted tobacco-21 laws.

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