



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Ohio “Tobacco 21” Law Takes Effect on Oct. 17;** **Age to Purchase Tobacco and Vaping Products Now 21** *Ohio Tobacco Quit Line (1-800-QUIT-NOW) offers free resources for quitting*

COLUMBUS – Ohio’s new “Tobacco 21” law takes effect on Thursday, Oct. 17, raising the age to purchase cigarettes, other tobacco products, and alternative nicotine products such as e-cigarettes and vaping products from 18 to 21. It will also become illegal to give such products to others under age 21.

“Research indicates that approximately 95% of adult smokers begin smoking before they turn 21,” said Ohio Governor Mike DeWine. “Increasing the age to 21 will reduce the chances of our young people starting to smoke and becoming regular smokers.”

“Evidence suggests that nicotine use during adolescence and young adulthood has long-term impacts on brain development, and tobacco use remains the leading cause of preventable death in the U.S.,” said Ohio Department of Health (ODH) Director Amy Acton, MD, MPH. “Raising the sales age for tobacco and vaping products from 18 to 21 means that those who can legally obtain these products are less likely to be in the same social networks as high school students.”

According to a 2015 report by the Institute of Medicine, raising the tobacco sales age from 18 to 21 will likely prevent or delay initiation of tobacco use by adolescents and young adults, particularly among youth 15 to 17 years old.

The types of tobacco and alternative nicotine products covered by the new law include cigarettes; electronic smoking devices such as vapes, e-cigarettes, and tanks; cigars; pipe tobacco; chewing tobacco; snuff; snus; dissolvable nicotine products; filters, rolling papers, pipes, blunts, or hemp wraps; liquids used in electronic smoking devices whether or not they contain nicotine; and vapor products – any component, part, or additive that is intended for use in an electronic smoking device, a mechanical heating element, battery, or electronic circuit and is used to deliver the product. Tobacco products and alternative nicotine products do not include products such as nicotine replacement therapy for use when quitting tobacco and other nicotine products.

The law requires retailers to post a sign indicating that it is illegal to sell tobacco and alternative nicotine products to anyone under the age of 21. A clerk who sells tobacco and alternative nicotine products to a person under 21 and the owner of the retail establishment may face criminal penalties that increase after the first violation under Ohio’s Tobacco 21 law. For a first offense, a misdemeanor of the fourth degree, a clerk is subject to no more than 30 days in jail and a fine up to \$250, and the retail establishment is subject to a fine of \$2,000.

For more information about Ohio’s Tobacco 21 law, go to [OhioTobacco21.gov](http://OhioTobacco21.gov) or call the toll-free hotline at 1-855-OHIO-T21. ODH’s Ohio Tobacco Quit Line at 1-800-QUIT-NOW offers free resources, including non-judgmental quit coaches for quitting tobacco and vaping products.

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