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Washington Kids Will Kick Butts – and Juul – on March 20

State Leaders Challenged to Fight Skyrocketing Epidemic of Youth E-Cigarette Use

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Kids in Washington will unite against tobacco use on March 20 as they join thousands of young people nationwide to mark Kick Butts Day, an annual day of youth activism sponsored by the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids. More than 1,000 events are planned across the United States (see below for a list of local events).

This year, kids are focused on kicking Juul, the e-cigarette that has become enormously popular among youth across the country.

While cigarette smoking among high school students nationwide has fallen to 8.1 percent, e-cigarette use among high schoolers rose by an alarming 78 percent in 2018 alone – to 20.8 percent of the student population. In 2018, more than 3.6 million middle and high school students used e-cigarettes. U.S. public health leaders have called youth e-cigarette use an “epidemic” that is addicting a new generation of kids.

In Washington, 12.7 percent of high school students use e-cigarettes, while 6.3 percent smoke cigarettes. Tobacco use claims 8,300 lives in Washington and costs the state \$2.8 billion in health care bills each year.

On Kick Butts Day, youth and health advocates are calling for strong action to reverse the youth e-cigarette epidemic. In particular, they are calling on the Food and Drug Administration, states and cities to ban all flavored tobacco products, including e-cigarettes in flavors like cotton candy, gummy bear and mango that tempt kids. Other effective strategies to reduce youth tobacco use include laws raising the tobacco sale age to 21, significant tobacco tax increases, comprehensive smoke-free laws and well-funded tobacco prevention programs.

In Washington, youth advocates are urging state lawmakers to pass legislation to raise tobacco sale age to 21.

“This year on Kick Butts Day, we’re challenging policy makers at every level to do their part to reverse the youth e-cigarette epidemic and continue driving down youth tobacco use,” said Matthew L. Myers, President of the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids. “We cannot allow e-cigarettes, especially Juul, to addict another generation and reverse the enormous progress we’ve made in reducing youth tobacco use.”

Key facts about e-cigarettes include:

- The main cause of the youth e-cigarette epidemic is Juul, which looks like a computer flash drive, is small and easy to hide, delivers a powerful dose of nicotine, and comes in kid-friendly flavors like mango, fruit and mint. According to the manufacturer, each Juul “pod” (cartridge) delivers as much nicotine as a pack of 20 cigarettes.

- E-cigarettes pose serious health risks for kids. [The U.S. Surgeon General](#) has found that youth use of nicotine in any form – including e-cigarettes – is unsafe, causes addiction and can harm the developing adolescent brain, affecting learning, memory and attention. Studies also show that young people who use e-cigarettes are more likely to become cigarette smokers.

On Kick Butts Day, youth join in creative events including signing pledges to be tobacco-free, learning about the harmful chemicals in tobacco products and organizing rallies at state capitols.

In Washington, activities include:

On March 18, students from **Stevenson High School** will hold a “Stand Up 4 Teens Summit” at **Skamania Lodge**. Activities will include information sessions on the dangers of tobacco use and mindful yoga. Time: 8:15 AM. Location: Skamania Lodge, 1131 SW Skamania Lodge Way, Stevenson. Contact: Suz Clark-Bennett (509) 427-5631 x1740.

At **Sunnyside High School**, students will make tombstones out of foam board with statistics on tobacco use, as well as a pledge wall where students can commit to being tobacco-free. Time: 10 AM. Location: Sunnyside High School, 1801 E. Edison Avenue, Sunnyside. Contact: Eveth Padilla (509) 831-7914.

Students from **Cle Elum Roslyn High School** will participate in a number of anti-tobacco activities, including creating interactive poster boards, signing a pledge wall, and making presentations on the dangers of vaping. Time: 10 AM. Location: Cle Elum Roslyn High School, 2690 State Route 903, Cle Elum. Contact: Cathie Songer (509) 941-0350.

Students from **Oakesdale High School** will hold a tobacco-free celebration day, with activities including signing a pledge and playing games to raise awareness about the dangers of tobacco use. Time: 11:30 AM. Location: Oakesdale High School, 101 E. McCoy Street, Oakesdale. Contact: Diane Harp (509) 285-5296.

On March 26, parents and adults led by **Prevent Together: Battle Ground Prevention Alliance** in **Battle Ground** will participate in an information session to learn about possible signs of teenage drug and alcohol use. The event features a room full of “mock teenagers” to see how well adults can spot the early signs of drug or alcohol use, a presentation from Professor Jim Jensen on how adolescents’ brains react to drug use, and a discussion panel following the presentation. Time: 5 PM. Location: Battle Ground High School, 300 W. Main Street, Battle Ground. Contact: Kathy Deschner (360) 624-6816.

All events will take place March 20 unless otherwise indicated. For a full list of Kick Butts Day activities in Washington, visit www.kickbuttsday.org/map. Additional information about tobacco, including state-by-state statistics, can be found at www.tobaccofreekids.org.