

FAQ: TOBACCO ADVERTISING AT RETAIL LOCATIONS

ARE YOUTH INFLUENCED BY RETAIL TOBACCO ADVERTISING?

Yes! Advertisements for tobacco that are placed at retail locations where tobacco is sold, such as gas stations and convenience stores, have been shown to increase youth tobacco use. Remember that 75% of teens visit tobacco retailers, usually convenience stores, at least weekly and are exposed to tobacco ads. According to the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, a “2010 longitudinal study in *Pediatrics* similarly found that more visits to stores per week increased the odds of teens initiating smoking, even over time. In fact, the study found that the odds of initiation more than doubled for teens who visited a store with point-of-sale tobacco ads at least twice a week.”

HOW MUCH TOBACCO ADVERTISING AT RETAIL LOCATIONS IS THERE?

Researchers at the University of Illinois found that 80% of retail locations have tobacco advertising on the inside of the store, and 60% have tobacco on the outside. Over 40% of gas stations, which are visited routinely by most Americans, have tobacco advertisements in the parking lot areas. In California, a study showed that the average tobacco retail location has 25 tobacco ads inside the store – which is frequently more signage than for alcohol, candy, or gas.

ARE ADS AT TOBACCO RETAIL LOCATIONS THAT IMPORTANT TO THE TOBACCO COMPANIES?

Tobacco companies are spending more money on retail location advertising: between 1998 and 2006, the tobacco industry almost doubled their marketing budget from \$6.9 billion to \$12.8 billion. Almost 90 percent of tobacco marketing dollars are spent on point of sale advertisements, discounts, promotional allowances, or other special deals. While tobacco companies argue that tobacco ads are only intended to persuade existing users to switch brands, evidence shows that these ads also encourage youth to begin using deadly tobacco products.

WHAT CAN WE DO ABOUT TOBACCO ADVERTISING AT RETAIL LOCATIONS WITHIN OUR COMMUNITY?

The most important thing we can do is raise awareness about the impact that tobacco advertising has on tobacco use rates – especially among our youth. As more community members become aware that seeing tobacco ads inside a convenience store or tobacco ads next to the gas pumps is directly related to more youth becoming addicted to deadly tobacco products, the more local support we will have to reduce the amount of tobacco advertising within our community. Also, some tobacco retailers may voluntarily reduce the amount of advertising they display at their retail location in order to support community health.

