



Normalization

What Is Normalization?

A behavior, such as using e-cigarettes, comes to be seen as “normal” as people see it more and more in everyday life. Normalization leads to people becoming more likely to try the behavior themselves.

Over the past 50 years, scientists and the public have learned a lot about the health effects of tobacco use and how tobacco companies have marketed cigarettes to consumers. Because of this information, smoking prevalence in the US has dropped from **42%** in 1965 to less than **17%** in 2014. Smoking is no longer “normal”.

However, e-cigarette use may “renormalize” smoking of traditional cigarettes. Regardless of whether e-cigarettes look like traditional cigarettes, using these products mimics the act of smoking, and seeing e-cigarette use may trigger smoking cravings in others.



Adolescents and young adults are particularly susceptible to social influences. Teens with friends and family members who smoke are more likely to smoke themselves because they perceive smoking as acceptable and normal behavior. Similarly, teens with friends who use e-cigarettes are more likely to try them, too.

Marketing also contributes to normalization. E-cigarette ads with cool, attractive, rugged, and fun-loving characters appeal to youth, and are very similar to old cigarette ads featuring the **Marlboro Man** and **Joe Camel**. Television and radio tobacco advertising was prohibited in 1971, and ads targeting youth were prohibited in 1997, but e-cigarette advertising is not limited at this time.

Among adults, e-cigarette advertising can trigger cigarette cravings.

Visit www.achd.net/chrono/smoking/ for the full list of sources for this document.