

What is Autism?

Autism or Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a neurological and developmental disorder that affects a person's ability to interact with others, communicate, learn and understand the world around them¹. Research shows that access to needed services and supports early in life can promote people's health and well-being over the long term¹.



What are several indicators of autism?

Autism refers to a broad range of conditions characterized by challenges with social skills, repetitive behaviors, speech and nonverbal communication. According to the Centers for Disease Control, autism affects an estimated 1 in 31 children and 1 in 45 adults in the United States today. There's not one type of Autism but many².

Do people with autism have substance abuse problems?

Research suggests people with autism are approximately twice as likely to experience substance use problems as the general public. Substance abuse may be more common in the autistic community due to preferring rituals and repetitive behavior, difficulty with self-regulation and as a way of coping with the environment.³

Vaping and autism: which American Lung Association's treatment works best for this population?

When teens use nicotine, a highly addictive substance found in most vapes and tobacco products, access to evidence-based prevention and cessation programs matter. Due to the spectrum of symptoms of autism, one solution may not work for all teens. Take some time to decide which of the Lung Association's youth vaping intervention programs may be a good fit for your autistic teen's needs, abilities and comfort levels.



Youth Tobacco Education and Intervention Programs:

1. INDEPTH® - Alternative to Suspension (free)

Intervention program for teens who vape, use tobacco or violated tobacco-free campus policies. The program is an evidence-based alternative to suspension for grades 5-12. Sessions can be held at school or in a community setting.

Sessions (1-10 students): Administered by a trained adult facilitator in a one-on-one or group setting. Four modules, 50 minutes each, delivered over 2-4 weeks. Learn more at Lung.org/indepth.

2. INDEPTH Online - Alternative to Suspension (free)

An online course offered to students who vape, use tobacco or have violated school tobacco-free policies. Students can be referred into the program. It can be offered immediately after a violation, before, during or after school. The facilitator can monitor students' progress on the INDEPTH Online portal. Program for grades 5-12. Available in Spanish.

Sessions (1-student): Adult trained facilitator, individual online program, 4 modules, 50 minutes each, over 2-4 weeks. Learn more at Lung.org/indepth.

3. Not On Tobacco (N-O-T)® – Voluntary Cessation Program (free for students, \$400/facilitator training)

N-O-T is an evidence-based approach to help youth quit or reduce their vape or tobacco use, using a facilitated group-based program. The program can be offered in a school or community setting. In addition to supporting them through their quit journey, the comprehensive program helps youth build life skills including fitness, nutrition, stress management and communication skills. N-O-T is facilitated by a certified adult.

Voluntary Sessions (1-10 students): Group based, adult trained facilitator, 10 classes, 50 minutes each, over 9-10 weeks. Discover more information at Lung.org/not.

4. NOT for Me Online (free)

A self-guided, mobile-friendly web-based program that gives teens the resources to quit vaping, smoking or chewing tobacco products. This digital modality is based off our Not On Tobacco (N-O-T) youth cessation in-person group program curriculum. N-O-T has 25 years of proven success in helping young tobacco users gain strength, health and freedom from nicotine addiction and tobacco dependency. American Lung Association's NOT for Me web-based program is available at no cost at www.NOTforMe.org.

For adults wishing to learn more about the program content, visit Demo.notforme.org for a demonstration site (with a 5-minute, instead of 5-day, waiting period between sessions). Available in Spanish.

Voluntary Sessions (1 student): For students who do not feel comfortable in a group setting. Self-guided, mobile-friendly, web-based, 8 self-paced sessions over 6 weeks (5 days apart). Learn more at NOTforMe.org.

1. nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/autism-spectrum-disorders-asd; 2. autismspeaks.org/what-autism; 3. autismspeaks.org/substance-use-disorder