

Study: Reduce teen smoking by upping sales age

By Nicholas Bakalar, New York Times

A study has found a simple way to significantly reduce teenage smoking: raise the tobacco sales age to 21. In 2005, Needham, Mass., did just that, while surrounding communities kept their age limit at 18.

Researchers surveyed 16,000 high school students in Needham and 16 surrounding communities four times between 2006 and 2012, gathering data on their smoking habits. The study is in Tobacco Control.

Over the seven years, the number of children under 18 buying cigarettes in Needham decreased to 11.6 percent from 18.4 percent, while in the surrounding communities it hardly changed – down to 19 percent from 19.4.

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