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[American Youths Quit Smoking and Started Taking Painkillers](#)

Painkiller usage has increased

The anti-smoking campaigns and government regulations have led to a dramatic decrease in cigarette smoking among American youths. The same goes for drug usage, whose rate, although not as significant as the previous, has adopted the same downward trend. Although US officials are delighted with the results of the efforts made to change the unhealthy habits American youths have, the Monitoring the Future 2005 study warns about the increasing number of teenagers who abuse prescription drugs. "While cigarette smoking is at lowest levels in the history of the survey and overall drug use among teens and adolescents is continuing to decline, there remain areas of concern with specific drugs of abuse such as prescription painkillers," Dr. Nora D. Volkow, director of the National Institute on Drug Abuse, said. "Prescription drugs are very powerful medicines that are effective when used properly and with a doctor's supervision. Using these drugs without a prescription is dangerous. It's imperative that teens get this message." "The best news in this year's report is the significant decline in cigarette smoking, not just because that ultimately is the most deadly drug but also because it confirms that drug abuse is best reduced through sensible public health measures rather than criminal penalties, prosecutions and prisons," said Ethan Nadelmann, executive director of the Drug Policy Alliance. Among the painkillers indicated by the 50,000 participants, OxyContin grew from 4 percent to 5.5 percent of high school seniors from 2002 to 2005, and Vicodin has gone in 2005 from 9 to 9.5. They were only topped by marijuana, 44.8 percent of the respondents in twelve grade and 34.1 of the ten graders admitting trying at some point in their lives. Following this study, which confirms the efficiency of the measures taken by the government against smoking, it's likely that the US officials will come up with harsher regulations targeting cigarette ads and specially designed smoking areas. "Our nation's progress in reducing youth smoking is at risk unless they take more aggressive action to prevent kids from smoking and curb tobacco marketing," William V. Corr, executive director of Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, told the AP.