

# Energy Pouches vs. Nicotine Pouches Toolkit



## What are Energy Pouches?

Energy pouches are small, non-liquid, and tobacco-free products designed to deliver caffeine through the lining of the mouth for a fast energy boost. Marketed as a convenient, discreet, and zero-sugar alternative to beverages. Energy pouches are often used in settings where drinking coffee or energy drinks is impractical, including the gym, while driving, or in the workplace. They can also function as a transition from nicotine pouches.

## Usage Among Youth

Energy pouches are becoming popular among teens due to their discreetness, flavors, and social media buzz, despite limited usage data. Marketed for enhancing mental alertness and performance, they appeal to youth but pose risks; adolescents are more sensitive to caffeine, which can lead to anxiety and sleep issues. Health experts emphasize that nicotine pouches, like Zyn, also pose risks to brain development and impulse control. Both types are deemed unsafe for youth, calling for increased monitoring and education.

## Safety & Risk Concerns

Energy pouches carry safety risks primarily due to their high caffeine content and rapid absorption. Excessive use can cause palpitations, arrhythmias, nausea, dizziness, insomnia, and anxiety. They may also be habit-forming, especially for youth, who are more vulnerable to caffeine's effects. Experts are concerned about marketing to minors and the potential for overconsumption, particularly when pouches are used alongside other stimulants or mistaken for nicotine products.

## Regulations

Energy pouches are regulated as foods or dietary supplements, not tightly controlled products, so they don't need FDA pre-approval. Manufacturers must label them honestly, but don't have to prove safety or effectiveness before selling. This has raised concerns about limited oversight—especially for caffeine content and marketing to younger users—leading some experts to call for stricter rules or age limits.

# How Do They Work?

Placed between the upper lip and gum, they release caffeine that is absorbed directly through the oral mucosa into the bloodstream, bypassing digestion and producing quicker effects than coffee or traditional energy drinks.

# What are IN Energy Pouches?

Each pouch typically contains between 25 mg and 100+ mg of caffeine, sometimes as much as 200 mg, along with fillers like cellulose, flavorings, sweeteners, and occasionally B-vitamins. Caffeine, the active ingredient in energy pouches, is usually sourced from coffee beans, guarana, or yerba mate.

## Similarities to Energy Products

- Energy pouches offer a quick boost similar to energy drinks and some ready-to-drink coffees, without needing a meal replacement.
- Both energy pouches and nicotine pouches share a similar pouch format and method of use.
- Energy and nicotine pouches can be consumed discreetly without the need for liquids.



## Differences to Energy Products

- They are absorbed through the mouth, leading to faster effects.
- Energy pouches contain zero sugar and calories.
- Unlike nicotine pouches, energy pouches do not contain nicotine or tobacco, reducing addiction risks.
- Despite these differences, energy pouches can still pose health concerns due to high caffeine content and potential for overuse.

# What are Nicotine Pouches?



Nicotine pouches are small, smokeless pouches containing a dissolvable powder that is placed between the upper lip and gum that delivers nicotine without tobacco leaf or combustion.

They typically contain:

- Nicotine (synthetic or tobacco-derived), plant-based fillers, flavorings, sweeteners, and stabilizers.
- Popular brands include Zyn, Velo, and On!.

Nicotine pouches are a smoke-free alternative to cigarettes and vaping but still contain addictive nicotine, which can impact heart rate, blood pressure, and teen brain development.

Nicotine pouches do not include tobacco leaf. Some contain nicotine made from tobacco plants or nicotine made in a laboratory. These pouches may be referred to as synthetic nicotine or non-tobacco nicotine (NTN). Nicotine pouches are often marketed as a cleaner or safer alternative to combustible tobacco products, but no tobacco product is safe.

According to the National Youth Tobacco Survey, nicotine pouches were the second most commonly used tobacco product among youth in 2024. More research is needed to better understand the short- and long-term health effects of using nicotine pouches. Additionally, the FDA has not approved any nicotine pouches to help people quit smoking. Researchers need more information to understand the potential effects that nicotine pouches may have on quitting smoking.

## Resources

**Tobacco Free Kids:** <https://www.tobaccofreekids.org/what-we-do/global/nicotine-pouches>

**Smokefree Teen:** <https://teen.smokefree.gov/>

**American Lung Association:** <https://www.lung.org/quit-smoking>

**Truth Initiative:** <https://truthinitiative.org/>

**CDC:** <https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/nicotine-pouches/index.html>

**DCCCA:** <https://www.dccca.org/>

**Kansas Prevention Collaborative:** <https://kansaspredictioncollaborative.org/>

