

Israel: Working To Increase The Minimum Age To Buy Cigarettes To 21

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The Association of Public Health Physicians, the Medical Association for Prevention and Termination of Smoking and the Israel Cancer Association, on Wednesday 11 Kislev, sent a professional position paper to the Ministerial Committee for Legislation on the issue of restricting the sale of tobacco products to persons aged 21 and over.

The position paper was submitted prior to the Committee's discussion of the proposed bill to increase the age of prohibition on the sale of tobacco products, submitted by MK Yehuda Gluck, signed by about 20 Knesset members from all factions of the House, The Israeli Medical Association for Prevention and Termination of Smoking and the Israel Cancer Association, said that it is necessary to protect youth from early exposure to tobacco and nicotine products.

Nicotine is a highly addictive substance and its effect on the brain of adolescents and young adults can lead not only to addiction, but also to attention and learning disorders, impulsivity and mood disorders. Studies show that exposure to nicotine in adolescence causes permanent structural change in the brain, which increases the risk of addiction to other drugs. The purpose of the law, which limits the sale of tobacco products to those aged 21 and over, is to reduce smoking and the use of tobacco and its enormous damage to individuals and society.

Epidemiological studies show that 80 percent of smokers smoked before the age of 20, and 90 percent of those who purchased cigarettes for minors were under the age of 21. This data indicates that raising the age of sale to 21 can effectively eliminate the ability of minors to purchase or ask other high school students, which significantly increases access barriers. Moreover, brain development is a process that extends from infancy to the late twenties.

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