

Nicotine pouches: adolescents are the main victims of severe poisoning



Once again, ANSES is warning of the risks associated with the consumption of nicotine pouches by adolescents. Between 2023 and 2024, French poison control centres received more than 45 calls about their use among adolescents, including 11 cases of severe poisoning. Regulations on these products are expected to be introduced in France in the near future.

RISING NUMBERS OF POISONINGS THAT ARE PROBABLY UNDERESTIMATED

In September 2023, ANSES warned of the risks associated with the consumption of nicotine pouches by adolescents¹. Over the period 2017-2022, around 10 of them, aged between 12 and 17, presented with severe nicotine poisoning syndrome, suffering from prolonged vomiting, hypotension and even convulsions and consciousness disorders, requiring medical treatment.

The figures for 2023 and 2024 have confirmed this trend. Over this period, French poison control centres (PCCs) received 90 calls about adverse effects related to the consumption of nicotine pouches. In more than half of these cases (54%), the call concerned someone aged between 12 and 17. These adolescents had mainly consumed nicotine pouches in groups and while at school (65%).

Eleven adolescents presented with severe nicotine poisoning syndrome, requiring treatment in an emergency department. While these figures may seem low, they are just the tip of the iceberg. They only include situations in which a call has been made to a PCC. There were probably numerous other cases treated in healthcare facilities for which poison control centres were not consulted.

These figures confirm the trend observed previously: adolescents remain the main population group affected by severe poisoning. Young people are encouraged by social media to consume nicotine pouches to keep them alert or improve their sporting performance.

REGULATION OF THESE POUCHES ON THE HORIZON

A draft decree banning nicotine products for oral use in France is currently subject to consultation by the European Commission. In addition, a bill designed to regulate new nicotine products and prevent the risks associated with their use has been on the French parliamentary agenda since June 2025.

While the legislative framework for the sale of these products is being studied, ANSES reiterates its warning about the risks of short-term nicotine poisoning and longer-term dependence among adolescents.

Attention also needs to be paid to the emergence on the market of pouches advertised as nicotine-free but actually containing nicotine analogues (e.g. 6-methyl nicotine, also known as metatine), for which toxicological data are still insufficient.

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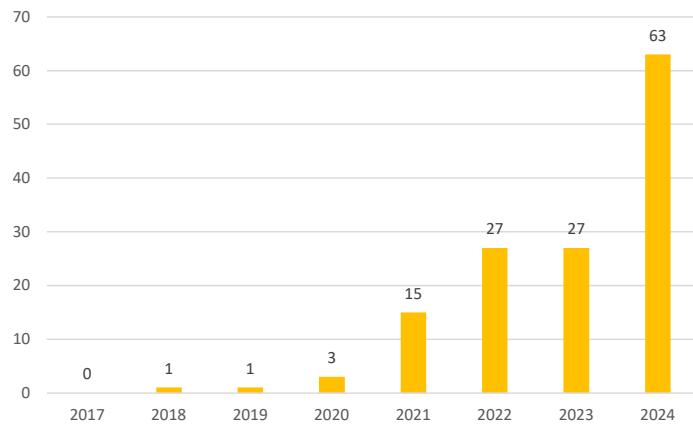


Figure 1 - Annual number of cases of exposure to nicotine pouches reported to the PCCs between 01/01/2023 and 31/12/2024.

Source: SICAP.

¹https://vigilances.anses.fr/sites/default/files/Vigil'Anses_N21_EN-tobaccoproducts.pdf