

## NJ101.5

### Princeton seeks to prohibit tobacco sales under the age of 21

By [David Matthau](#) April 21, 2015 5:30 AM

On Tuesday evening, the [Princeton Board of Health](#) is expected to formally adopt an ordinance banning the sale of tobacco products to anyone under the age of 21.

If the measure is approved, Princeton will join Bogota, Englewood, Sayreville and Teaneck as the only Garden State towns with such laws on the books. Currently, [state law prohibits the sale of tobacco products to individuals under the age of 19](#).

“Many people start smoking before they’re 21 and everybody knows that once you start it can be very difficult to stop. It’s damaging to people’s health and oftentimes people who start want to quit, and it’s very difficult to do,” Princeton Mayor Liz Lempert said.

When asked how effective such a ban will be, she acknowledged neighboring towns would still be selling tobacco products to 19 and 20-year-olds. “But I think Princeton is often a leader when it comes to health issues like this and I know raising the age for tobacco sales is also being considered at the state level too,” the mayor said.

Lempert said hopefully as more and more towns take a stand, the state will follow suit.

“We’re trying to raise everyone’s consciousness about the issue and also encourage the young people in our community, of which we have many, to at least delay that first cigarette,” she said.

According to Lempert, Princeton residents have been very supportive about the proposed ordinance.

“We know many smokers take their first puff when they’re young, and the idea is to try to delay that first cigarette,” Lempert said. “If we do that perhaps that person will choose not to become a smoker.”

She also said that a couple of years ago, Princeton banned smoking in parks and other public places, and since then other towns have followed suit.

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