

## **Of Cigs And Selfies: Teens Imitate Risky Behavior Shared Online**

<https://www.npr.org/transcripts/258690319>

DAVID GREENE, HOST:

And now let's turn to the other end of the age spectrum. A recently study published in the Journal of Adolescent Health looks at how much teens are influenced by their peers online. As you might expect, the answer is quite a bit.

NPR's Patti Neighmond reports on what that can mean and what parents might be able to do about it.

PATTI NEIGHMOND, BYLINE: It's probably the most popular way teens talk to each other today - online comments and photos, which is why researchers from the University of Southern California wanted to know how much kids were influenced by those postings when it comes to risky behaviors, like smoking or drinking.

Researcher and public health specialist, Thomas Valente describes the type of photo's he's talking about.

THOMAS VALENTE: Kids partying, you know, generally two or three in a picture, raising their glasses or raising their cups or their beer cans, and then posting those pictures online and then writing things underneath it, like having a great time, you know, here at the party, and things like that.

NEIGHMOND: Valente surveyed more than 1,500 - 10th grade students in high schools in Southern California. He asked them how many friends posted photos of themselves smoking or drinking. Then, he asked the students about their own activities over the next six months.

VALENTE: For students who have friends who are partying online, they're more likely to become drinkers and smokers over time.