

Know the Facts: E-Cigarettes & Vaping

Parent Edition



WHAT ARE E-CIGARETTES?

E-cigarettes, often called “vapes,” are alternative tobacco products that produce an aerosol by heating a chemical liquid.

The e-cigarette aerosol that users breathe in can contain harmful and potentially dangerous substances, including:

- **Nicotine**, the chemical that makes smoking addictive
- **Flavorings** such as diacetyl, a chemical linked to a serious lung disease
- **Heavy metals** such as nickel, tin, and lead

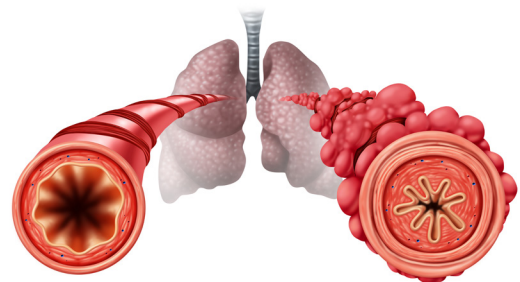


Despite a 2020 ban by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration on flavoring in e-cigarettes, disposable devices containing flavoring remain available and are now popular among youth. E-cigarettes often come in various shapes and sizes, sometimes resembling USB flash drives, flashlights, gaming controls, or pens.

WHAT ARE THE NEGATIVE HEALTH EFFECTS?

Studies have shown that nicotine, the addictive chemical substance found in e-cigarettes, can have harmful effects on the developing brain, including parts of the brain that control attention, learning, mood, and impulse control.

Vaping can also be harmful to the lungs. “Popcorn Lung,” also known as bronchiolitis obliterans, can cause inflammation and lead to scarring of the airways, which makes it hard to breathe. E-cigarettes may also cause arterial stiffness, impede blood flow, raise blood pressure, and heart rate—all of which can lead to heart attacks and other heart related conditions.



“Popcorn Lung” inflammation and scarring (right)

WHY ARE YOUNG PEOPLE VAPING?

Students are more likely to start vaping if their friends vape. Vaping has become a social norm across schools and across social media.

There are many reasons why young people start vaping, which may include:

- **Social Influences**
- **Advertising**
- **Appealing Flavors**
- **Nicotine**

HOW DO I KNOW IF MY CHILD IS VAPING?

There is a common misconception that vaping helps with stress, anxiety and depression. However, vaping can make those symptoms worse.

Here are some signs to look out for if you are concerned that your child is vaping:

- **New smells** (vapes come in all kinds of flavors so be on the lookout for fruity or sweet scents)
- **New or increased health issues** such as coughing, wheezing, sore throat, difficulty breathing or nausea
- E-cigarette supplies such as **cartridges, pods, or unusual devices** (e.g. a new USB drive)
- Your child is **asking for or spending more money** than usual
- **Nicotine withdrawal** which can include irritability, cravings, restlessness, difficulty concentrating, and mood swings



Colorful e-cigarette advertisements in vape shop window display.



HOW DO I TALK TO MY CHILD ABOUT VAPING?

It is important that you talk to your child about vaping, here are some tips for having this conversation:

Stay Calm

Your demeanor will set the tone for your communication.

Start Early

Educate your child before they are exposed to vapes.

Find the Right Time

Bring up vaping in a natural way, like when you see it in a TV show. This is more effective than sitting your child down for a lecture.

Do Not Be Accusatory

Make it a dialogue. Listen without judgment. State your concerns calmly.

Ask Them What They're Hearing or Seeing at School

Correct any misconceptions and emphasize that these products are not safe.

Talk About Industry Manipulation

Point the blame at the industry and its desire to make money at the expense of your child's health.

Avoid Extremes

E.g., "the vape device will blow up and kill you." Be factual and fair in delivering the message.

Leave the Door Open for Your Child to Ask More Questions in the Future

This should be an ongoing discussion. It takes time to change a person's mind.



RESOURCES

Text **DITCHVAPE** to **88709**

Visit **RespHealth.org/quit-vaping-resources** for more information.

Respiratory Health Association offers vaping education for students, school staff, and parents. Please contact **info@RespHealth.org** for more information.

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