

# FACTS FOR PARENTS ABOUT VAPING (E-CIGARETTES)

Do you know what e-cigarettes are? Do you know how e-cigarettes affect a person using them? What is vaping? As a parent or caregiver, it is always important to communicate with teenagers about substances, such as cigarettes, e-cigarettes, and other drugs, and their potential harms. Here are some facts that could be helpful for you to know as a parent or caregiver of a teenager.

## What is an e-cigarette and what is vaping?

The Alcohol and Drug Foundation refers to Vaping as the use of an electronic device (e-cigarette) to heat liquids and produce a vapor, which is then inhaled – mimicking the act of smoking.



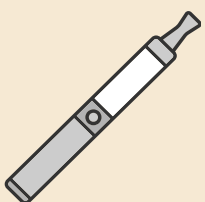
## The following substances can be in e-cigarettes

- Nicotine (which is the main psychoactive drug in tobacco)
- Other drugs e.g. THC (cannabis).
- The 'e-liquid' which contain a range of unregulated chemicals, and additives such as sweeteners, flavours, alcohol.

What is in an e-cigarette depends on the manufacturer & can vary.

## What does an e-cigarette look like?

E-cigarette devices can be a variety of shapes, sizes and styles. They may be shaped and coloured to make them look like traditional cigarettes or other tobacco products like cigars, pipes, hookahs, shishas, and sometimes they look like everyday items such as pens or USB memory sticks.



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## Why is it important to know about e-cigarettes/ vaping?

The Alcohol and Drug Foundation reports of concerning trends in a number of countries showing increasing popularity of e-cigarettes amongst adolescents. Even though the purchase of e-cigarettes in NSW is not legal, there appears to be increasing useage by teenagers. There may be an initial attraction to e-cigarettes, as there are enticing flavours available, they may be cheaper to purchase than cigarettes, and peers may influence teenager. This makes it more important to communicate the associated risks with teenagers.

Unlike traditional cigarettes, e-cigarettes have not been around long enough for us to know more about the risk and long term side effects. Presenting the information we do know about vaping to your teenager is really important, so they are of aware of the risks vaping may have on their health.

### What are the short term side effects?

- Bad breath
- Dizziness
- Fast heart rate
- Feeling alert
- Feeling relaxed
- headache
- Reduced appetite
- Vomiting



### Long term side effects & potential harms

- E-cigarettes haven't been around long enough for us to know how they affect the body over time. NSW Health reports that e-cigarettes may expose users and bystanders to chemicals & toxins that are harmful to health.
- The Australian Chief Medical Officer and all state and territory Chief Health Officers have issued a statement on the emerging link between e-cigarette use and severe lung disease. There have also severe cases of lung disease, which have led to deaths overseas.
- Emerging reports show that young people who smoke e-cigarettes are more likely to smoke cigarettes in the future.



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## Harmful effects of Nicotine

It is very important to tell your teenager the effects nicotine has on the body:

- Nicotine is highly addictive and can cause someone to crave more, and suffer withdrawal symptoms if they ignore the craving.
- Nicotine can slow brain development in teenagers and affect memory, concentration, learning, self-control, attention and mood
- Nicotine is a toxic substance. It can lead to heart problems, breathing problems and cancers.
- Vaping and nicotine can increase the risk of other types of addiction.



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## Do e-cigarettes help people stop smoking?

There is currently no evidence to support the use of e-cigarettes as an effective form of smoking cessation, and for this reason the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) have not approved e-cigarettes as a quit tool. NSW Health does NOT endorse the use of e-cigarettes as a strategy to quit smoking because of the associated risks. Government approved strategies to quit smoking are available, in consultation with a doctor.

Some research points to a potential rise in smoking rates by re-normalising smoking, reducing a smoker's motivation to quit or indirectly encouraging non-smokers to take up the habit.

### For more information about e-cigarettes:

NSW Health- [health.nsw.gov.au](http://health.nsw.gov.au)

Alcohol and Drug Foundation- [adf.org.au/drug-facts/e-cigarettes](http://adf.org.au/drug-facts/e-cigarettes)

\*The information in this fact sheet has been sourced from these evidence based sources



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## Having the conversation

Now you have the facts you can try to open up a conversation with your teenager about it. If you find out that they are vaping, try to explore why your teenager is vaping. It could be to help manage anxiety, relieve stress, distract from unpleasant emotions, or connect socially with peers. Being curious about the reasons can help them feel less judged so they can open up to you. It may also give you a window into your teen's underlying struggles, help them develop insight into their own behaviour, and point to problems that may need professional support. These conversations may be challenging for a parent to have with a teenager, of course, and some young people have limited understanding as to why they use substances.



### If you or your teenager need a safe place to chat, we can help!

2Connect Youth & Community offer free support to teenagers and their families. We have youth workers who specialise in talking with parents and teenagers about drugs and alcohol. If you would like your teenager to talk to someone about vaping, gives us a call on 9556 1769. We provide practical and emotional support (case management and counselling) for youth and families.

### Other useful contacts

- Talk to your teenager's year advisor or school counsellor
- Use evidence-based sources such as Australian Drug Foundation <https://adf.org.au> for the most accurate information. Call them on 1300 85 85 84
- Talk to your family doctor for information and support
- Phone Alcohol Drug Information Line on 1800 250 015 (24hrs)



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