

# Vapes and E-cigarettes – Their Appeal and Your Approach



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No plumes of smoke. No burning cigarette smell. Labels with "all natural" and innocent-sounding fruit flavors. It can make parents wonder just how worried they need to be about their teens using vapes and e-cigarettes. The fact of the matter is, these devices haven't been studied and aren't regulated like traditional, tobacco cigarettes. And, although they do not use tobacco, many do contain nicotine – along with other ingredients like propylene glycol, solvents and flavors – making them potentially harmful and addictive.

While recent data from National Institutes of Health surveys and the Centers for Disease Control show cigarette smoking to be at historic lows among teens, vapes and e-cigarettes remain popular. Some of the reasons they are attractive to teens include:

- No secondhand smoke, so no foul odor or telltale clouds of smoke, making them more socially acceptable
- Flavors like fruits, mint and even crème brûlée are appealing to teens and make vaping seem less harmful
- Innovative devices like Juuls, that resemble a USB drive, or Suorin, with devices shaped like teardrops or with slim profiles to like credit card-sized electronics are easy to carry and often overlooked by parents
- Misconception among teens that continue to positively reinforce the perception that vapes and e-cigs are "safe" and "non habit forming." In fact, when asked in a recent NIH survey, more than half said "just flavoring"

### **What are the risks?**

When vapes and e-cigarettes first came on the market, they were **marketed** as a great way to help smokers quit smoking. **Manufacturers and distributors claimed that the liquids sold did not** contain the carcinogens - **cancer-causing chemicals** - that cigarettes do and they don't produce secondhand smoke. In many cases, they cost less when compared with traditional cigarettes; however, this is because they have yet to be targeted for state taxes that currently affect cigarette producers. They also present their own risks.

- Devices are designed to heat up the liquid in the pod or container and turn it to vapor, which is inhaled. The liquid is not regulated so there's no precise way to know what chemicals are being inhaled.
- A JUUL pod has a formula that contains 5% nicotine, the equivalent of a pack of cigarettes, and produces an intense nicotine rush that can

produce nicotine high. This affects cognitive development and can make a young person susceptible to substance use disorders or substance dependence when they're older. In addition, there are a multitude of other, more potent risk factors associated with substance dependence/substance use problems.

- *Nicotine is a highly addictive substance.*
- *Nicotine is a known health hazard that adversely affects the vascular system and fetal development and may promote tumor growth.*

### **What can you do?**

Although most state laws require individuals to be 18 or older, that can still put access to vapes and e-cigarettes within reach of your teen. Misinformation and the mystique of these devices can make them attractive, so arm yourself and your teen with information:

- Ask what they think of vaping and if they're aware of it among friends and classmates.
- Tell them what you know about the dangers of it and the short- and long-term risks to them.
- Visit websites to see what these devices and accessories look like so you'll know if you find them at home.
- Share news stories and articles that talk about the subject.

Above all, make sure your teen understands your expectations and rules regarding smoking, vaping and the use of e-cigarettes – and the consequences if they are broken. Depending on their age and the laws in

your state, they may also be breaking the law or school rules, subjecting them to other punishment as well.