

TALKING WITH YOUR TEEN ABOUT VAPING

A TIP SHEET FOR PARENTS



BEFORE THE TALK: GET THE FACTS

Vaping has risks

- > Vaping can increase one's exposure to chemicals that can potentially harm your health.
- > Vaping can lead to physical dependence and/or addiction.
- > Vaping can increase coughing, wheezing and asthma exacerbations in teens.
- > The long-term health consequences of vaping are unknown.

Risks of nicotine

Nicotine is a highly addictive chemical. Youth are especially susceptible to its negative health effects, as it can interfere with healthy teen brain development and can affect memory and concentration. It can also lead to physical dependence and/or addiction. Youth may become dependent on nicotine with lower levels of exposure than adults.

Although not all vaping products contain nicotine, the majority of them do, and the level of nicotine can vary. A vaping product can deliver more or less nicotine than a cigarette.

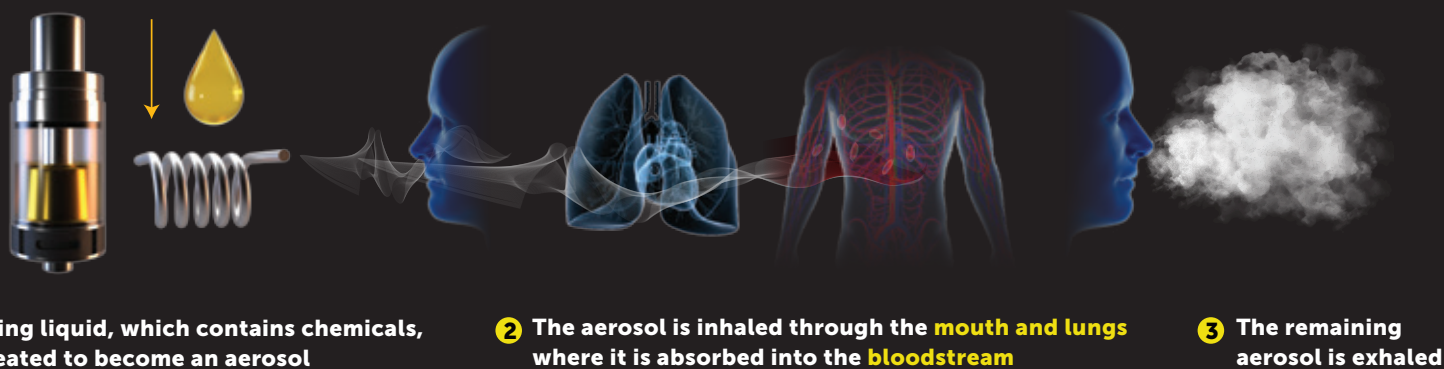
Quitting vaping can be challenging once one has developed a physical dependence and/or an addiction to nicotine. Nicotine withdrawal symptoms can be unpleasant.

Vaping nicotine can interfere with healthy brain development until the mid-20s.



Even if a vaping product does not contain nicotine, there is still a risk of being exposed to other potentially harmful chemicals.

How it Works: From liquid to aerosol



Did you know?

- > Data from the 2021 Canadian Tobacco and Nicotine Survey (CTNS) shows that reducing stress (33%) was the most common reason youth ages 15–19 reported vaping with and without nicotine; other reasons include because they enjoyed it (28%) and wanted to try it (24%).
- > Vaping products can be difficult to recognize:
 - Devices come in a variety of shapes and sizes, such as resembling a USB flash drive or a pen;
 - Vaping may not leave a lingering identifiable smell;
 - Add-ons like vinyl “skins” or wraps can also make these items harder to recognize; and,
 - Some types of clothing may hide the use of vaping products.
- > Vaping products have many names, such as: e-cigarettes, vape pens, vapes, mods, disposables, and e-hookahs. They may also be known by their brand names.
- > The *Tobacco and Vaping Products Act* (TVPA) prohibits tobacco and vaping products to be sold or given to anyone under the age of 18. Be aware of the laws in your province or territory, as some have increased the age to 19 or 21.
- > The TVPA also sets out other limits on vaping products such as a maximum nicotine concentration of 20 mg/mL and restrictions on promotions, flavours and other ingredients.



Vaping and quitting smoking

Nicotine vaping products have not been approved in Canada as a quit smoking aid, so they are not available as a prescription at this point. However, a number of Canadians are trying to quit smoking by vaping nicotine, and have said it has helped. While the science is evolving, evidence suggests that vaping nicotine (using e-cigarettes), can help adults quit smoking.

For adults who are unable to quit smoking using approved methods, completely replacing cigarette smoking with vaping will reduce their exposure to many of the harmful chemicals from tobacco smoke. Learn more Canada.ca/quit-smoking.

It is not safe for youth to use any nicotine or cannabis products, including cigarettes and vaping products. The use of vaping for smoking cessation has only been studied in adults and there is no information currently available on the effectiveness in teens. If you suspect your child is struggling with addiction or physical dependence, talk to your healthcare provider.

Vaping liquids

The ingredients typically found in vaping liquids include glycerol, flavours, propylene glycol and varying levels of nicotine.

The heating process can cause reactions and create new potentially harmful chemicals. Some contaminants, such as metals, might also get into the vaping products and then into the aerosol.

The long-term health effects of vaping nicotine and cannabis are unknown and continue to be researched.

Vaping and cannabis

Cannabis can be vaped using either dried cannabis, liquid, or solid cannabis extracts. Cannabis vaping products containing cannabis extracts (disposable vape pens, for example) can be very strong and contain up to 95% THC. THC, one of the substances in cannabis, can interfere with healthy brain development until the mid 20s. The higher the THC consumed, the greater the risks to mental health, including the development or worsening of cannabis dependence, and feelings of anxiety and depression.

Risks of illegal vaping products

The use of cannabis products including cannabis vaping accessories outside of the legal market can pose additional risks to health and safety. In 2019, an unregulated cutting agent, vitamin E acetate, was used in illegal THC-containing vaping products and was associated with an outbreak of Vaping-Associated Lung Illness which caused thousands of hospitalizations and dozens of deaths in the United States.

SET A POSITIVE EXAMPLE

If you use tobacco, cannabis or vaping products, be honest with your teen about the risks, and any regrets, difficulties and health effects resulting from your experience. Talk with your teen about when and why you started to smoke/vape and explain how you thought it would make you feel, and how it is affecting your health.

It is never too late to quit smoking. If you are vaping to help you quit smoking, talk with your teen about it. Talk with them about addiction and dependence and how hard it can be to quit smoking. And remember, quitting smoking is possible. For free help, visit [Gosmokefree.gc.ca/quit](https://gosmokefree.gc.ca/quit) or call 1-866-366-3667.

START THE CONVERSATION

Before you start the conversation, learn some of the various words that teens use to describe vaping to better relate with your teen. Check out the **Learn the lingo** video.



Find the right moment

Take advantage of situations where you can talk about vaping. It doesn't have to be formal. For example, when passing by a group of teenagers who are vaping, take the opportunity to have a non-judgmental conversation with your teen about it. Find out if your teen has friends who vape or if they considered trying it or felt pressured to try vaping.

Talk with your teen about ways to refuse vaping in a way that makes them comfortable. You can help them to make a plan and think-through what they will say, or do.



Be patient and ready to listen

- > Avoid criticism and encourage an open dialogue.
- > Remember, your goal is to have a meaningful conversation, not to give a lecture.
- > Thank your teen for being honest with you if they tell you that they have tried vaping or vape regularly. Then offer to share some information about the risks of vaping, and discuss the benefits of being smoke- and vape-free.
- > If your teen tells you they are interested in quitting or reducing their use, help them come up with their own goals and support them in achieving them.

Get support

- > Ask your healthcare provider to talk with you and your teen about the risks of vaping and ways to be smoke- and vape-free.
- > Consider suggesting that your teen talk with other trusted adults, such as relatives, teachers, faith leaders, coaches, or counsellors whom you know are aware of the risks of vaping. These supportive adults can help reinforce your message.

KEEP THE CONVERSATION GOING

- > Don't expect to have just one conversation with your teen. Odds are you will probably need to talk about it many times. Remind your teen that you are always available to chat about this issue.
- > Keep in mind that talking about it can also set the stage for important discussions about tobacco, alcohol, cannabis, nonmedical use of prescription drugs, like opioids, or other risky behaviours.



For more information on vaping or cannabis, visit:
Canada.ca/vaping or **Canada.ca/cannabis**

