

Journey to Wellness — A free self-guided healthy living program

# Stop the vape



Vaping has become a popular trend, but **what are the real risks?** Vaping is not harmless. Understanding the potential health risks and **learning the facts** can help you to make informed decisions about your health and well-being.

## What is vaping?

Vaping is the use of an electronic cigarette, or e-cigarette, and may also be known as “juuling.” E-cigarette or vaping products can deliver nicotine. Modifiable devices, sometimes called “mods,” allow people to put different substances in the device, such as cannabis (THC, CBD), flavorings like mint, apple and cotton candy, and other chemicals. These battery-operated devices heat a liquid solution to turn it into an aerosol or vapor that can be inhaled into your lungs.

Vaping products are known by different names and device types, such as:

- E-cigs
- E-hookahs
- Vapes
- Vape pens
- Nic sticks
- JUUL, pronounced “jewel”
- Dab pens or dab rigs, called “dabbing”
- Tanks or tank systems
- Mods or pod-mods
- Electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS)

E-cigarettes are the most common device type among youth.

## What do vapes look like?

Vapes come in various shapes and sizes. They may be designed to look like everyday products, such as pens, colorful highlighters, USB flash drives, smartphone cases, smartwatches, hoodies and jackets. Others look like cigarettes, cigars or pipes. Vapes can be disposable after one use or have rechargeable systems.

## Why is vaping bad?

- Nicotine is highly addictive and can affect concentration, learning, memory, mood, impulse control and brain development. Brain development in adolescents continues into the early- to mid-twenties.
- Vaping can last up to 20 minutes, and some vaping mixtures can contain twenty times the nicotine of a single cigarette.
- E-cigarette aerosol can contain harmful substances, including nicotine, heavy metals like nickel, tin and lead, cancer-causing agents and ultra fine particles that can be inhaled deep into the lungs.
- People around someone who is vaping can also breathe in the aerosol when the user exhales into the air, making it harmful to more than just the person vaping.
- Acute nicotine exposure can be toxic. Poisoning can occur by swallowing, breathing or absorbing e-cigarette liquid through the skin or eyes.

When people become addicted to nicotine and stop using it, their bodies and brains must get used to it. This can result in temporary withdrawal symptoms, including feeling anxious or depressed or having trouble concentrating and sleeping.

## How to help others

Families, friends, healthcare providers and educators can play a significant role in protecting others, especially youth, from the dangers of vaping. Holding conversations is an essential first step in encouraging those around you to not vape or quit vaping. Here are some suggestions:

- Set a good example by being tobacco-free.
- Explain why vaping is harmful and what the health risks are.
- Recognize and acknowledge the social pressure youth feel to vape.
- Encourage others to contact a healthcare provider or school nurse for quitting resources and support services.
- Help them develop healthy skills and positive coping strategies for stress and anxiety.
- Look for warning signs if you do think someone has started to vape.

Information adapted from “A doctor’s warning about the dangers of vaping,” “Empower vape-free youth campaign” and “Electronic cigarettes.”

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MC4770-42