

Vaping: What You Need to Know

What is a vape or e-cigarette (electronic cigarette)?

An e-cigarette, commonly called a vape, is a battery powered device that heats a liquid chemical into an aerosol (sometimes known as a “vapour”) that can be inhaled. Inhaling this aerosol is called vaping and the liquid chemical is called e-liquid. E-liquid contains propylene glycol, chemical flavouring, and other additives that come pre-filled (in a pod or disposable device) or in a refillable container (e-cartridge). E-liquid does not contain tobacco, however, most of these products contain nicotine which is the highly addictive substance found in cigarettes.

There are many types of e-cigarettes that come in a variety of shapes and styles, and new products are emerging. Vaping products are often referred to by different names such as vapes, vape pens, dab pens, mods, tanks, disposables, sub-ohms, e-hookahs or by their brand name

What are the concerns with vaping products?

Health Risks

Research has demonstrated there are both short and long-term health risks. Although vaping products may have fewer chemicals than tobacco cigarettes, vaping is not harmless. Vaping products include components that are known to be harmful to your health. For example:

- Most e-liquids contain nicotine which is highly addictive
- Some e-cartridges, pods and disposables contain as much nicotine as one pack of cigarettes
- Some containers of e-liquid contain enough nicotine to cause nicotine poisoning which can cause serious harm to a child, adult or an animal when absorbed through the mouth, eyes or skin
- Nicotine can alter teenage brain development which can affect concentration, memory and impulse control, and sometimes lead to behavioural changes.
- The aerosol produced by vaping products contains other chemicals such as formaldehyde, acrolein, vegetable glycerin, propylene glycol and artificial flavourings
- This aerosol can be an irritant to the throat, lungs and eyes
- The use of vaping products can cause coughing, wheezing, worsening of asthma symptoms, shortness of breath and chest pain
- The health effects of second-hand vapour are still being studied
- Vaping products are also used to inhale other substances such as cannabis
- Youth who use vaping products may be more likely to smoke cigarettes in the future

Legal Considerations

Federally, the Tobacco and Vaping Products Act (TVPA) was enacted on May 23, 2018 to regulate the manufacture, sale, labelling and promotion of tobacco and vaping products sold in Canada.

Provincially, the Smoke-Free Ontario Act 2017 places restrictions on the promotion, display and sale of tobacco and vaping products. This includes prohibiting the sale and supply of

- Vaping products to anyone under 19 years of age
- Flavoured vaping products in non-specialty vape stores such as convenience stores and gas stations (except tobacco flavour and mint flavour)
- Flavoured tobacco products (except wine, port and rum flavours)
- Vaping products which contain nicotine levels greater than 20mg/ml in non-specialty vape stores such as convenience stores and gas stations
- Vaping products where the sale of tobacco is banned

Under the Smoke-Free Ontario Act 2017, the use of vaping products is prohibited in places where smoking tobacco is banned such as school grounds, enclosed workplaces, restaurant patios and certain public spaces such as playgrounds and sporting areas. Where you can't smoke, you can't vape.

Other Considerations

- Public use of vaping products could make smoking appear more common and socially acceptable, weaken the efforts of tobacco law and policy, and provide a visual trigger to ex-smokers causing relapse
- The use of vaping products may cause people to start smoking cigarettes or other substances
- Strong marketing to youth, popularity and use in public spaces can influence young people to try vaping
- Vaping product use by teens is increasing at alarming rates



Can vaping products help you quit smoking?

Some evidence suggests the use of vaping products may help to quit smoking. Vaping products do deliver nicotine in a less harmful way than smoking. However, there is a risk that individuals who smoke may begin to use both vaping products and tobacco cigarettes rather than quit smoking. Quit smoking medications along with support and a quit plan can more than double the chances of quitting success. There are over the counter nicotine replacement therapies (NRT) as well as prescription quit smoking medications that are proven to be safe and effective in helping people quit.

For assistance with quitting please call York Region Public Health at 1-877-464-9675 or email the Tobacco-Free Living Program at tobaccofreeliving@york.ca.

PUBLIC HEALTH

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