



The Dangers of Vaping



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INSIGHTS FOR FAMILIES is provided by your child's school in recognition of your role as a partner in education. Insights is produced by Marcia Latta, communications consultant.

Vaping is popular many among teens and young adults. The CDC estimates that one in every 20 middle school students used e-cigarettes in 2020, and one in every five high school students vapes.

It is the most commonly used tobacco product among youth and has the same health risks as all tobacco products as well as additional toxins produced by the e-cigarette device.

The dangers of vaping

Vaping is dangerous. Young users may not realize this because they think the vape pen looks cool or seems safer than cigarettes, but it isn't. They may not care because they are young and more likely to take risks as teens, but parents should tell their children about these risks anyway.

According to pulmonologists, there are four main health risks to vaping

1. Vaping puts teens at high risk for nicotine addiction.

Most e-cigarettes contain nicotine. Teens may not realize how highly addictive nicotine is or how concentrated the nicotine is in e-cigarettes. The developing teen brain makes them even more susceptible to nicotine addiction, which can affect attention span, learning, mood and impulse control.

2. Vaping is bad for your lungs.

E-cigarettes have toxins in the aerosol and chemicals in the flavor cartridges, which are even more dangerous when heated. The health dangers include serious lung injuries and impairment, and the long-term effects are still unknown.

3. Vaping, even once, affects cardiovascular health.

The nicotine and chemicals in e-cigarettes have been tied to heart disease. A 2019 study found that people who vape were 56% more likely to have a heart attack and 30% more likely to suffer a stroke than those who do not vape. Studies have shown these risks after just one e-cigarette.

4. Use of e-cigarettes increases risk of other substance use.

Vaping can be a gateway to other substance use. Teens who use e-cigarettes are more likely to smoke tobacco and use other substances such as drugs and alcohol. Studies have found that teens who vape are more than three times more likely to use marijuana.

<https://bit.ly/3t4Ff7P>

How to know if your kids are vaping

Vaping devices come in a variety of shapes and sizes. Parents may not recognize one if they see it, and teens may be very defensive about

being confronted or under suspicion for vaping. Parents can watch for the following signs of possible vape use before approaching teens:

- **Increased thirst.** Vaping removes hydration from the skin of the mouth and throat, resulting in greater thirst. If your child drinks significantly more, they may be vaping.
- **Desire for flavor.** When the mouth is dried out, you lose flavor perception. With routine vaping, food can become less flavorful. This is called “vaper’s tongue.” If your teen uses much more salt or spice, they may be vaping.
- **Nosebleeds.** Vaping also dries the skin of the nose, which can cause nosebleeds.
- **Acne.** Watch for unusually bad or more frequent breakouts.
- **Cutting back on caffeine.** Vaping can cause or increase anxiety and severe mood swings, which can be worse if coupled with caffeine. Users often decrease their caffeine intake to avoid these side effects.
- **Pneumonia.** E-cigarette vapor can cause inflammation in the lungs, leading to infections or pneumonia.
- **Finding unfamiliar USB drives, battery chargers or spare parts.** Devices for vaping have cartridges and parts such as spare wires, cotton balls or small containers (“pods”) that contain e-juice. Your teen may be vaping if they have unfamiliar tech parts or devices with their things or in their trash.

<https://bit.ly/3aVdQz7>

What to tell your child

Teens and young adults engage in risky behavior despite warnings from parents, teachers and adults with expertise. They may not listen, but it is important to keep talking to them to help keep them safe. Experts suggest that starting young is the best approach.

The American Lung Association has resources for parents. Print or email the Vaping Conversation Guide to get started: <https://bit.ly/3eJ6pfx>.

Getting ready:

- Know the facts.
- Consider your child’s viewpoint.
- Be calm.
- Practice what you will say.

Talking to your child:

- Acknowledge your child’s independence.
- Ask what they think.
- Be ready to hear them if they admit that they vape.
- Blame Big Tobacco, not your child.
- Avoid scare tactics.

After you talk:

- Thank them.
- Help them manage their stress.
- Help them handle peer pressure.
- Check in and leave lines of communication open.

www.lung.org/quit-smoking/helping-teens-quit/talk-about-vaping/conversation-guide