

FACTS ABOUT VAPING

WHAT IS VAPING?

Also known as e-cigarettes, e-cigs, electro-smoke, vapes, vape pens, pods, Juul, electronic nicotine delivery system (ENDS), puff bars, e-hookah, IGET bar Vaping involves inhaling vapours produced by heating a liquid solution ("e-liquid" or "e-juice") in battery-operated devices. Devices or "vapes" are used to smoke nicotine, but are also used to smoke other drugs, such as cannabis, or nicotine-free flavoured liquids.

How they are used

Puffing activates the vape, which vaporises the liquid for the person to inhale. Vapes can be disposable or refillable, and come in a variety of shapes, sizes and styles, with hundreds of brands and many flavours available. Vapes may look like cigarettes, metallic pens or USBs. They can be slightly larger to include refillable pods or tanks.

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It is not always clear what vape e-liquids contain due to inconsistent and poor labelling. Labels may claim the vape is nicotine-free when it actually contains high levels. Labels also don't list any harmful and potentially harmful ingredients, such as:

- ultrafine particles that can be inhaled deeply into the lungs
- chemicals, which may cause cancer or other serious health issues, and include those found in nail polish remover, weed killer, cleaning products and bug sprays
- volatile organic compounds, such as benzene which is found in car exhaust
- heavy metals, such as nickel, tin and lead
- flavourings, such as diacetyl, which may be safe when used in food, but may not be safe when inhaled into the lungs.

WHY PEOPLE VAPE

People, in particular young people, are drawn to vaping because the devices are novel, bright, small, easy to hide and easily purchased online. They are thought to be safer than normal tobacco cigarettes and are cheaper and taste better with flavourings such as mango, bubble-gum and peppermint etc. Many vape to help reduce or quit smoking. We are not yet fully aware of the potential harms and long-term effects of vaping.

EFFECTS OF VAPING

We are still learning about the effects. Newer vaping products may be more harmful, with higher concentrations of nicotine and higher temperatures which can release more toxins into the vapour.

Because vapes mostly contain nicotine, short-term effects may include:

- happiness and more alert
- nausea and vomiting
- headaches
- shortness of breath, increased risk of asthma
- mouth and airway irritation
- chest pain and heart palpitations.

Devices may cause injuries including burns through fires and explosions or poisoning through children swallowing the liquid.

Long-term effects may include...

The consequences of inhaling chemicals, additives and flavourings (contained in nicotine and nicotine-free vapes) are not yet fully understood, though they may cause lung damage. Vaping nicotine can lead to nicotine dependence. Nicotine is well known to cause many types of cancer and heart and lung disease, as well as a range of other health issues. In young people, whose brains are still developing, nicotine can affect learning, mood and impulse control.

TIPS FOR REDUCING RISK

Vaping is not safe. There will always be a health risk. The only way to be safe is not to vape. If you choose to vape, the following will help reduce risk:

Before: choose a vape that is of a reputable brand and nicotine-free. If choosing to vape nicotine, find out how much nicotine your vape contains and make sure it is not too high, as levels vary across brands.

During: don't inhale too much vapour

Avoid: sharing vapes, vaping too often.

IS VAPE USE BECOMING A PROBLEM?

It may be a problem if you agree with any of these statements:

- I spend a lot of time vaping nicotine or another drug
- I often feel strong urges to vape and I am vaping more and more often
- I have withdrawal symptoms when I don't vape – irritability, restless, jittery, headaches, increased sweating, feeling depressed or anxious, tired, difficulty concentrating or sleeping.

TIPS FOR PROBLEMATIC VAPE USE

- seek support from a health professional, as well as from family and friends
- avoid people, places, objects, feelings or situations associated with vaping
- start doing activities you enjoy that don't involve vaping
- look after yourself – get enough sleep, follow a healthy diet, adopt a balanced lifestyle
- set some personal goals.

VAPING AND THE LAW

Vapes are available to purchase from pharmacies by those 18 years or older where the pharmacist assesses this to be clinically appropriate.

In May 2023, the Federal Government announced its aim to ban recreational vaping by working with Australian states and territories to:

- stop the import of non-prescription vapes
- restrict flavours, colours, and other ingredients
- require pharmaceutical-like packaging
- reduce the allowed nicotine concentrations and volumes
- ban all single use, disposable vapes and
- ban retail stores from selling vapes, including nicotine-free vapes.

FOR SUPPORT – CALL DRUG ARM

CALL DRUG ARM CENTRAL INTAKE ON 07 3620 8880 DURING BUSINESS HOURS TO ACCESS FREE SUPPORT OR EMAIL INTAKE@DRUGARM.COM.AU. FOR GENERAL INQUIRIES, CALL 1300 656 800 OR EMAIL INFO@DRUGARM.COM.AU.

FOR 24/7 SUPPORT CALL:

ALCOHOL & DRUG INFORMATION SERVICE:
1800 177 833 (QLD) AND 1800 250 015 (NATIONAL).