



Fact Sheet

Vaping: Information and advice for parents and carers

Vaping is addictive and harmful for lungs, brain development and general health.

General information

Electronic cigarettes (also called e-cigarettes or vapes) are similar to smoking cigarettes – but without the use of tobacco.

Vapes are battery-operated devices that heat a liquid (e-liquid or “juice”) until it turns into an aerosol. The aerosol is then inhaled and this is called “vaping”. People wrongly think the aerosol in vaping is only water vapour, but it actually contains dangerous chemicals.

The biggest misunderstanding about vaping is that it is harmless compared to smoking cigarettes. This is not true.

Both smoking and vaping involve breathing in chemicals that can harm your health.

There are many different styles of vapes and they can be difficult to spot. They can look like a highlighter, a pen or a USB.



There are no quality or safety standards for vapes and their ingredients.

The main ingredient in vapes is propylene glycol, vegetable glycerine or glycerol. They can also contain harmful chemicals, and often they are not listed on the label. Some of the chemicals in vapes are the same as those found in cleaning products, nail polish remover, weed killer and bug spray.

Most e-cigarettes also contain nicotine, making them very addictive.

The nicotine in 1 vape can equal 50 cigarettes or more.

Yet, the flavours (like watermelon, caramel, bubble-gum etc.) and colourful packaging of vapes make them appealing to young people.

Tobacco companies are always looking for new customers. Vapes are a new way to get young people addicted to nicotine, which is often difficult to quit.



Vaping laws

To protect young people, e-cigarettes are treated the same as tobacco cigarettes under Tasmanian law. This means:

- a person under 18 cannot use, possess or buy vapes
- a person cannot supply vapes to a person under 18
- vapes cannot be used in public areas that are smoke free – this includes:
 - bus shelters
 - bus and pedestrian malls
 - within 3-metres of an entry or exit to a public building
 - bars and restaurants
 - workplaces
 - cars with a child in it
 - certain public events

It's also illegal for anyone (even adults) to use, buy or sell nicotine containing e-cigarettes in Australia without a prescription.

How vaping affects your child's body

Possible short-term impacts:

- nausea and vomiting
- mouth and throat irritation
- shortness of breath
- chest pain and heart racing
- weakening of immune system
- increased risk of developing asthma
- worsened strength and anxiety.

Long-term impacts can include serious lung disease and impacts on brain development. Nicotine changes the way brain synapses are formed in young people. This can impact attention, learning, memory, and mood.

Young people who vape are also 3 times more likely to start smoking tobacco cigarettes than those who do not vape.

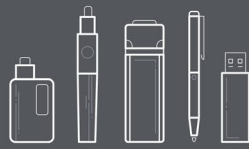
Talk to your children about vaping – be understanding and compassionate and try not to judge or criticise them.

Protecting your child

Research shows that children are less likely to smoke or vape if their primary role models (typically parents or carers) do not smoke or vape.

If you have found quitting difficult and still smoke or vape, share your experiences with your child.

The best way to protect your children is to never smoke or vape in the house or other places where there may be children nearby. Smoking or vaping in a car when children are present is illegal. Passive exposure to e-cigarette aerosol can be damaging for children and young people.



Talking to your child or teen about smoking and vaping

As a parent or carer, you have an important role in protecting your child from smoking and vaping. Parent views on smoking and vaping can influence their children's behaviours. The most important thing you can do is to talk to your child or teen about smoking, vaping and other drugs.

Use these strategies to talk with your child or teen:

- try to start the conversation with your child in a relaxed easy-going way, perhaps taking the cue from around you, a note from school, a news story about vaping, or seeing people vaping on the street
- try to start the conversation with your child in a relaxed easy-going way, perhaps taking the cue from around you, a note from school, a news story about vaping, or seeing people vaping on the street
- be approachable and unshockable - listen to their ideas even if you don't agree
- try not to interrupt or react in ways that stop discussion - they might worry about telling you things you need to hear
- show them where to get accurate information from reliable sources
- help them think about risks to their health and wellbeing – but don't exaggerate
- encourage their involvement in a range of activities, sports and hobbies.

If you think your child is vaping, here are some tips to approach this topic:

- don't react immediately. Give yourself time to think through what's happening.
- The best way to find out what's happening is to ask them - that is, by talking rather than by 'detection'. Don't go behind their back and search for vapes. The loss of trust will be greater than the benefit of anything you might find out.
- Try to avoid strong reactions and big arguments that could harm your relationship.
- A respectful tone and body language can go a long way.
- Tell them you're concerned about their wellbeing and you think they might be vaping. Let them know you want to help.
- Avoid judging or lecturing – listen to their point of view and keep it a two-way conversation.
- Give them a chance to tell you what's happening without interrupting or lecturing. Find out how often and where they are vaping.
- Consider asking questions like: 'What made you want to try?' and 'How did it make you feel?'
- Ask what they need with and help them get support.

Information on what vaping is, the impacts and how to support your child is available

Where to get help

- **Quit Tasmania** offers resources, information and support for people to quit smoking and vaping, as factsheets. Tips for quitting can be found here under this link: <https://www.quittas.org.au/quit-plan/>
The link below directs you to a form where you can sign up to 1-on-1 support: <https://smokefreegeneration.org.au/need-help-quitting/>
Or you can call the Quitline for advice and confidential counselling from 8am to 5pm Monday to Friday on 13 78 48
- Culturally safe support is available through the Aboriginal Quitline: <https://www.quit.org.au/articles/aboriginal-quitline/>
- Your **family doctor** is a good place to get more information and advice regarding vaping.
- In our school, students can access **school health nurses**. Nurses can help with referrals, access to nicotine replacement therapy, managing nicotine dependence and cessation support.
- **HeadSpace** offers mental health support online, via phone and in person. Visit <https://headspace.org.au/>
- **Beyond Blue** offers similar support online and via phone <https://www.beyondblue.org.au/get-support/talk-to-a-counsellor>

If you want more information and resources, visit the DECYP webpage on vaping: <https://www.decyp.tas.gov.au/about-us/projects/child-student-wellbeing/vaping/>