

Vaping and Teens: What Parents Need to Know

What is vaping?

Vaping is the act of using an Electronic Cigarette device. E-cigarettes come in an array of battery-operated devices with containers filled with liquid that are usually made of nicotine, flavorings and other chemicals. A heating device called an atomizer turns the liquid into vapor that you inhale when you take a drag. Electronic cigarettes were designed as harm reduction products for cigarette smokers, however, they have morphed into “vapes” that have become very enticing to youth.



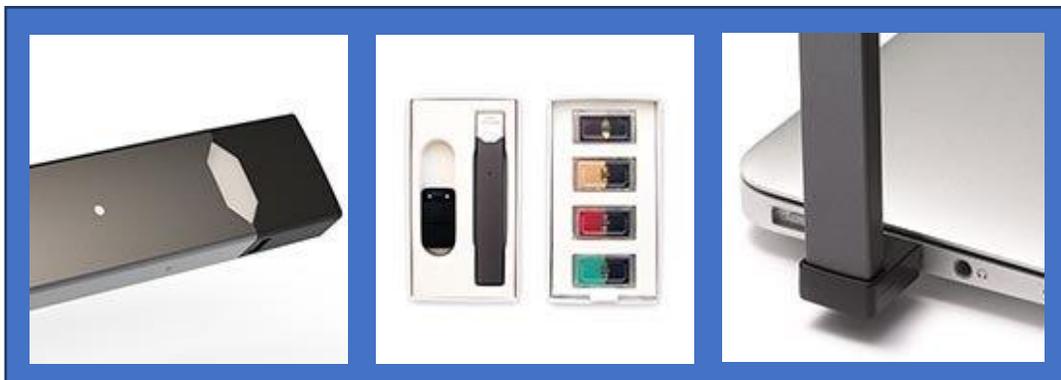
For youth, it is all about the flavoring, the head rush, the fun of blowing “clouds” and doing tricks. With flavors like mint, mango, fruit medley and crème brulee, it has taken off as a craze that is attracting middle and high school students across the country and schools are stressed to find a way to contain and address it.

What are the most popular products?



There are hundreds of manufacturers of electronic cigarette/vape devices. Like iPads, they have evolved through several generations. The earliest generations resembled cigarettes, then they developed into much larger devices. The newest generations are small, sleek, easy to conceal and look more like flash drives than cigarettes. The Food and Drug Administration put in place new regulations last summer banning the sale of e-cigarettes to anyone under 18 and requiring e-cigarette companies to submit products for premarket review. Even with these rules in place, it is incredibly easy to obtain vapes online, from kids at school, or from vape shops. A few that schools have been seeing most often are:

JUUL: Juul has taken off as the most popular vape amongst youth. It looks just like a flash drive meaning it is easy to conceal and use anywhere. A \$49.99 starter kit comes with a device, JUULpod multi-pack, and USB charger. The JUULpod multi-pack contains one each of Virginia Tobacco, Cool Mint, Fruit Medley and Creme Brulee. Each JUULpod contains the nicotine equivalent of 1 pack of cigarettes or 200 puffs, meaning it delivers a powerful head rush and the potential for quick addiction to nicotine.



Phix

Very similar in strength to Juul, a \$34.00 starter pack comes with a device, charger and one pod. Four pod refill packs are available for \$22.99 in the following flavors: Hard Strawberry, Spearmint, Original Tobacco, Butterscotch Tobacco, or Ice Tobacco.



What are the dangers?

- **Nicotine Addiction:** Many teens mistakenly think the products they are vaping are simply flavored water vapor. Not true. Most of the e-juice/pods popular with youth contain nicotine. The adolescent brain, still a work in progress, is particularly vulnerable to the effects of nicotine exposure. Not only is nicotine a stimulant that increases blood pressure, breathing, and heart rate, it is also incredibly addictive. Teens often start out to feel the dizzying head rush, but may soon find themselves craving it and needing more and more to get the feeling they are seeking.
- **Nicotine Poisoning:** Nicotine is a poison. In high doses a vape user could experience symptoms such as tremors, headache, nausea, vomiting and agitation. If a child or pet were to unknowingly consume the e-juice, it could lead to seizures, coma or even death.
- **Using devices to vape other drugs:** Electronic cigarette devices can be used to vape many kinds of drugs, not just nicotine. For example, some use these devices to smoke cannabis, hash oil and THC concentrates. It is very challenging for schools to know what these devices are being used for and are encouraged to ban them all together.
- **Unknown long term effects:** Testing of some e-cigarette products found the vapor to contain known carcinogens and toxic chemicals (such as formaldehyde and acetaldehyde), as well as potentially toxic metal nanoparticles from the vaporizing mechanism. The health consequences of repeated exposure to these chemicals are not yet clear as no long-term studies have been completed.
- **Switching to traditional cigarettes:** Some studies show that non-smoking youth who use e-cigarettes are more likely to try conventional cigarettes in the future than non-smoking youth who do not use e-cigarettes.

As a parent, where can I learn more?

There are many great resources for parents looking to learn more so they can have meaningful conversations with their children about vaping. A few of these sites are:

Surgeon General <https://e-cigarettes.surgeongeneral.gov/>;
https://e-cigarettes.surgeongeneral.gov/documents/2016_SGR_Fact_Sheet_508.pdf
NIDA https://d14rmgtrwzf5a.cloudfront.net/sites/default/files/ecig_drugfacts.pdf
CDC <https://www.cdc.gov/features/ecigarettes-young-people/index.html>

Additional References:

https://www.drugabuse.gov/sites/default/files/drugfacts_ecigs.pdf
<https://thebuzzmagazines.com/articles/2017/08/vape-debate>

