

# Vaping/Electronic Cigarettes

*What you need to know*

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## What is an electronic cigarette or e-cigarette?

An electronic cigarette or e-cigarette is a battery powered device that heats a liquid chemical (e-juice), into a vapor that can be inhaled. This is commonly called vaping. E-juice contains propylene glycol, flavoring, and other additives that come in a prefilled or refillable container (e-cartridge). E-juice does not contain tobacco, however, most of these products contain nicotine which is the addictive substance found in cigarettes.

There are many models of vaping products which come in a variety of shapes and styles, and new products are emerging. They are often referred to by different names such as hookah pens, vapes, mods, tanks, or sub-ohms. They are also sometimes referred to by their brand name such as Juul.

## What are the concerns with e-cigarettes?

### HEALTH RISKS

More research is needed to determine both the short and long-term health risks. Although e-cigarettes may have fewer chemicals than traditional cigarettes, vaping is not harmless. There are components that are known to be harmful to your health. For example:

- Most e-juices contain nicotine which can be highly addictive
- Nicotine can alter teenage brain development and effect memory and concentration
- Some e-cartridges contain as much nicotine as one pack of cigarettes
- Some bottles of e-juice contain enough nicotine to cause serious harm to a child, adult or an animal.
- Other chemicals such as formaldehyde, acrolein, propylene glycol and artificial flavorings are present
- It is unknown what health risks can come from the second-hand vapor from e-cigarettes. The vapor can be an irritant for the throat, lungs and eyes.
- E-cigarettes are also being used to inhale other substances such as cannabis, weight loss supplements and other drugs.
- Evidence is showing that youth who vape often go on to smoking cigarettes

## 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 e-cigarettes to anyone under 19 years of age
- Prohibiting the sale of vaping products where the sale of tobacco is banned
- Prohibiting the use of e-cigarettes 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.

## OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- Public use of e-cigarettes may 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.
- E-cigarette use (vaping) 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 e-cigarettes. Even those youth who do not use tobacco are beginning to experiment with e-cigarettes believing that they are safe.
- E-cigarette use by teens is increasing at alarming rates

## Can e-cigarettes help you quit smoking?

Although not scientifically proven yet, some evidence suggests that use of e-cigarettes may improve rates of successful quitting. Vaping products do deliver nicotine in a less harmful way than smoking. However, there is a risk that smokers may begin to use both e-cigarettes 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.

