

Vaping



Vapes can harm our health in many ways.
You can quickly become addicted to vaping.

What are vapes?

Vapes (also called e-cigarettes, vape pens and pods) can vary in shape, size and colour, but they all work the same way. Vapes contain a liquid (also known as e-liquid or e-juice) that is heated to become an aerosol, which the person then inhales.

When someone uses a vape, they can inhale over 200 harmful chemicals. Vape labels may be wrong or incomplete. Even when nicotine is not listed as an ingredient on the label many vapes contain high levels of nicotine, which is addictive. Some vapes have been found to contain toxic chemicals that are known to harm health.

Do many young people vape?

While most young people don't vape, the use of vapes is quickly increasing in Australia among all age groups, especially among young people. Recent research in NSW found that 16% of 14-17 year olds had vaped in the last month, and 32% had ever tried a vape. Health experts are worried vaping is becoming more common among young people, which is increasing the risk of nicotine addiction and harm from other chemicals found in vapes.

Key Health messages



Vapes have many chemicals in them that can harm your health, including some that have been linked to cancer, heart disease and lung damage.



Vapes can make you more likely to take up cigarette smoking.



The labels on vapes can be wrong or incomplete.



Using vapes can cause nicotine addiction, breathing problems, nausea. Long term, they may cause other illnesses, we just don't know yet.

Why do people vape?

Young people may start vaping due to:

- Curiosity
- To fit in or look cool
- The taste and flavours
- To quit smoking

Can vaping cause harm?

Yes. Vapes can harm our health in many ways. Most vapes contain nicotine, which is one of the most addictive drugs in the world. When young people use nicotine, it can lead to changes to brain development, memory and attention problems, mood changes and the potential to worsen stress and increase depression and anxiety. Those who vape but don't smoke are also three times more likely to start smoking compared to those who have never vaped. Importantly, as vaping is relatively new, we don't know the long-term health effects.

Vaping effects

- Coughing and breathing problems
- Headaches
- Dizziness
- Sore throat
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Burns and injury from the vape overheating or exploding
- Nicotine poisoning
- Nicotine addiction (dependence)
- Nicotine withdrawal (anxiety, irritability, low mood, stress when not able to vape)
- Severe lung damage, that can be life-threatening.



Is vaping legal?

It is illegal to sell vapes, and all other tobacco products to anyone under 18 years old. It is also illegal to sell nicotine vapes in retail shops such as convenience stores and tobacconists. Nicotine vapes are only allowed to be sold by pharmacies, if you have a prescription from a doctor and are over 18 years old.

Vaping is not allowed anywhere smoking is banned. This includes in enclosed public spaces such as on public transport and schools, and some outdoor spaces, such as swimming pools and dining areas. If you vape in these spaces, you can be fined up to \$300, given a warning or formal caution.



True or false

It's just water vapour

False. When heated, vape liquids create an aerosol which contains many chemicals like nicotine (the main addictive ingredient in tobacco) and diacetyl (linked to lung disease) and you breathe in these particles when you vape.

I can be sure my vape is nicotine-free

False. Labels on vapes are often incomplete or incorrect. Many vapes that are labelled as nicotine-free were found to contain nicotine when tested.

Vaping nicotine-free vapes is safe

False. Nicotine-free vapes still contain many harmful chemicals that have been linked to lung damage, heart disease and cancer.

Once I'm hooked, I'm hooked forever

False. It's never too late to quit. Nicotine withdrawal symptoms such as cravings are strongest in the first week. For most people, these will fade over 2-4 weeks. Having support to quit from a doctor or Aboriginal Health Worker will increase the chance of successfully quitting.

Vaping can help me feel more relaxed when I'm feeling tense or stressed

False. Although many young people believe that vaping has positive mental health benefits, there is no evidence that vaping improves your mental health. In fact vaping has been associated with mental health problems anxiety and depression.

Where can I get help to quit?



Have a yarn with your doctor or Aboriginal Health Worker.



Call Quitline on **13 7848** – a free and confidential service (you can ask to speak to an Aboriginal counsellor if you wish).



QuitTxt – visit www.quit.org.au/quittxt, they can send you messages to stay on track.



ICanQuit website – visit www.icanquit.com.au to create your own plan. There is also information and tools to help you quit.

Where can I find more information?



More information from the NSW Government on how you can quit smoking

www.health.nsw.gov.au/Aboriginal-smoking



Easy-to-read information for young people about smoking and nicotine addiction.

www.yourroom.health.nsw.gov.au/tobacco



Resources for young people about vapes and vaping.

www.lungfoundation.com.au/lung-health/protecting-your-lungs/e-cigarettes-and-vaping/vaping-and-young-people/

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The Aboriginal flag was designed by Luritja artist Harold Thomas.



The Torres Strait Islander flag was designed by Bernard Namok.

