



# What parents and caregivers need to know about vaping and e-cigarettes

Be prepared to talk with your teen

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There is a good chance that your teen has been or will be exposed to vaping or e-cigarette products. As a parent or caregiver, you play a key role in helping them make good and healthy decisions. This resource will provide you with need-to-know information about vaping so that you are better prepared to talk with your teen.

## What is vaping?

Vaping is the act of inhaling and exhaling aerosol produced by a vaping device (sometimes called an e-cigarette). The aerosols often contain nicotine, flavouring, and sometimes cannabis.<sup>1,2</sup>

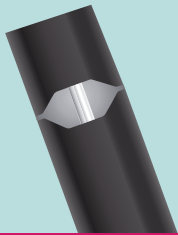
### Vaping devices have many names<sup>2</sup>:

- mods
- vapes
- e-cigs
- sub-ohms
- vape pens or e-pens
- e-hookahs
- tank systems
- electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS)
- dab pens (for “dabbing” cannabis extracts)<sup>3</sup>



Vaping devices come in many shapes and sizes.

Some resemble a pen or USB stick and can be easy to disguise.<sup>1</sup>



### E-cigarettes and vaping devices are typically made up of the following<sup>4</sup>:



- **Mouthpiece:** Can be disposable, changeable, or have other attachments such as a tube or hose.
- **Liquid reservoir:** Also called a cartridge, pod, tank or chamber. This is filled with liquid, often referred to as e-juice.
  - E-juice is typically made up of propylene glycol and/or glycerol, flavouring (chemicals), and many contain varying levels of nicotine. Some also contain cannabis extracts.<sup>2</sup>
- **Heating element:** Heats the liquid which then becomes an aerosol.
- **Battery:** Can vary in voltage and can be rechargeable.

Do not know how to answer a teen’s question?

Look up the information together from a credible source.

### How it works<sup>4</sup>:

- 1** Vaping liquid, which contains chemicals, is heated to become an aerosol.
- 2** The aerosol is inhaled through the mouth and lungs where it is absorbed into the bloodstream.
- 3** The remaining aerosol is exhaled.

## Did you know?

Youth are more likely to engage in positive behaviours and activities if they have a strong relationship with a caring adult.<sup>6</sup>

## Have open, honest, ongoing conversations with your teen about vaping.

Here are some tips<sup>5</sup>:

- **Make opportunities to talk.** This can be a casual conversation in the car or at the dinner table. It does not need to be formal.
- **Ask open-ended questions.** Try “Tell me more about...” or “How do you feel about...”
- **Be patient, positive, and listen to what they have to say.** Teenagers are more likely to be honest and keep the conversation going if they feel heard and respected. Thank them for sharing.
- **Be caring.** Ask them what they need and how you can help them.

## What else can you do?

- Ensure a safe, supportive, non-judgmental environment at home.
- Encourage your teen to approach a trusted adult if they have questions or need help.
- If you do smoke or vape, reflect on your own usage. This is an opportunity to discuss with your child challenges with addiction and quitting.
- Seek additional support and resources from Public Health Sudbury and Districts at 705.522.9200.

## “Less harmful” does NOT mean safe

Vaping has not been around for as long as smoking. We are still learning about the possible long-term effects. However, we do know that some of the chemicals used in common vaping products can pose real risks to the health of young people.<sup>7</sup>

Aerosol produced by an e-cigarette may contain heavy metals, formaldehydes, and other chemicals that can cause lung damage. Little is known about the effects of second-hand vapour, but it can also contain the chemicals found in e-juice.<sup>7,9</sup>

E-juice often contains nicotine. Nicotine is very addictive and can affect brain development, memory, and concentration.<sup>7</sup> Youth who vape may be more likely to become tobacco smokers in the future.<sup>11</sup>

Sharing anything by mouth, including vaping devices, can increase the risk of contracting viruses or infections.<sup>10</sup>

“Teen brains aren’t wired like adult brains”<sup>8</sup>

E-juice may contain enough nicotine to be poisonous, especially to young children, if swallowed or absorbed through the skin.<sup>7</sup>

## The law<sup>12</sup>

As of October 17, 2018, in addition to tobacco products, restrictions have been expanded to include vapour products and cannabis, either vaped or smoked. Smoking of tobacco or cannabis, or the use of vapour products (including holding an activated vaping device) is prohibited in the following places:

On the grounds of (or on public areas within 20 metres of)<sup>13</sup>:

- Schools
- Children’s playgrounds
- Publicly owned sporting and their fan viewing areas
- Enclosed public and workplaces—including work vehicles

It is also illegal to vape in a motor vehicle if any passenger is under the age of 16.

The Smoke-Free Ontario Act prohibits the sale and supply of e-cigarettes to anyone who is less than 19 years of age. Anyone who violates the Smoke-Free Ontario Act can face hefty fines.

### For more information:

- [About Vaping](#) (Health Canada)
- [Where you Cannot Smoke or Vape in Ontario](#) (Ontario Ministry of Health)
- [Vaping: The Mechanics](#) (Health Canada)
- [Not An Experiment](#) (Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit)

## You Can Quit Smoking

### We can help

Seek additional support and resources from Public Health Sudbury & Districts at 705.522.9200, ext. 3433 (toll-free at 1.866-522.9200, ext. 3433) or at [phsd.ca](http://phsd.ca).

## References

- <sup>1</sup> Government of Canada (2018). Smoking, vaping and tobacco: Vaping. Retrieved from <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/smoking-tobacco/vaping.html>.
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- <sup>11</sup> Center for Disease Control and Prevention (2022). Quick Facts on the Risks of E-cigarettes for Kids, Teens, and Young Adults. Retrieved from [https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/basic\\_information/e-cigarettes/Quick-Facts-on-the-Risks-of-E-cigarettes-for-Kids-Teens-and-Young-Adults.html](https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/basic_information/e-cigarettes/Quick-Facts-on-the-Risks-of-E-cigarettes-for-Kids-Teens-and-Young-Adults.html).
- <sup>12</sup> Government of Ontario (2017). Smoke-Free Ontario Act, 2017. Retrieved from <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/17s26/v1>.
- <sup>13</sup> Ontario Ministry of Health (2021). Where you can’t smoke or vape in Ontario. Retrieved from <https://www.ontario.ca/page/where-you-cant-smoke-or-vape-ontario>.