

Talking About Vaping: Tips for Parents and Trusted Adults

Before the Talk

- Know the facts and learn how to dispel common myths about vaping.
- Be familiar with vapour products – they come in many shapes, sizes and colours.
- To learn more about e-cigarettes and vaping, visit: www.healthunit.com/e-cigarettes.

Be a Positive Role Model

- Send a consistent message and don't vape, especially around children and young people.
- If you use tobacco or vape and are trying to cut down or quit, use approved cessation methods, such as nicotine replacement therapy (NRT), Champix, or Zyban. Talk to your health care provider or visit www.healthunit.com/quitting.

Start the Conversation

- Be patient, understanding, and ready to listen. Rather than saying “we need to talk,” encourage an open discussion by avoiding criticism, judgement, or giving a lecture.
- Ask them what they know and gain their perspective. Try saying “I’ve read about vaping and I’m curious about what you have heard.” Use open-ended questions to encourage discussion.
- Discuss how vaping and tobacco use (e.g. smoking) are shown and often glamorized in the media (e.g. movies, television, and online).
- Look for teachable moments, such as:
 - Seeing someone vaping in person or in the media
 - Passing a vape shop when you are walking or driving
 - Seeing any vapour product advertisements
- If you use tobacco or vapour products, have an honest conversation about when and why you started to smoke/vape, and any challenges you have experienced such as how it is affecting your health. Talk about addiction and how hard it can be to quit smoking or vaping.

Keep the Conversation Going

- Develop open and regular communication. Young people benefit from hearing information more than once.
- It's okay for your conversation to happen over time.

Answers to Common Questions

Why don't you want me to vape?

- Your brain is still developing, which means you are more vulnerable to addiction. Many vaping devices contain nicotine, and exposure to nicotine can change your brain to make you crave more nicotine. It can also harm parts of the brain that help you learn and focus.
- It's not just harmless water and flavouring. Even without nicotine, the aerosol produced by a vaping device contain toxic chemicals and heavy metals that can harm your health.

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What's the big deal about nicotine?

- Your brain is still developing. Nicotine is highly addictive and can harm how your brain works.
- Using nicotine at a young age can have lasting effects on your life. It can lead to poor memory, difficulty learning, and cause problems with your ability to pay attention. It can even put you at a higher risk of developing things like depression and anxiety.
- Nicotine can also train your brain to be more easily addicted to other drugs.
- Research is showing that vaping may lead young people to start smoking tobacco.

Is vaping safer than smoking cigarettes?

- Research is not yet clear whether vaping devices are safer than cigarettes. However, studies show that vaping devices and the aerosol they produce are not harmless.
- Vaping devices expose users to harmful toxins, including cancer-causing chemicals, diacetyl, volatile organic compounds, heavy metals, and ultrafine particles that can be inhaled deeply into the lungs. These substances have been linked to heart and non-cancerous lung disease.
- Vaping devices can explode, causing burns and projectile injuries. This risk of injury increases when batteries are of poor quality, if the device is stored improperly, or if the device is modified.
- The long-term health impacts of vaping are currently unknown.
- Let's look together at the Middlesex-London Health Unit's website to learn more about vaping.

I thought vapes didn't have nicotine – just water and flavouring?

- Some vaping devices do not contain nicotine, however, most do. The nicotine content varies from device to device. A device could still contain traces of nicotine, even if it is labelled as “no-nicotine.”
- The aerosol produced by a vaping device is not just harmless water vapour! It contains toxic substances such as formaldehyde and benzene, heavy metals such as nickel and lead, fine particulate matter, and nicotine.

I (or my friends) have tried vaping and it was no big deal.

- I appreciate your honesty. In the future, I hope you (or your friends) will stay away from vaping devices and other tobacco products, including cigarettes and chewing tobacco. Science shows that vaping devices contain ingredients that are addictive and could be harmful to your health.

You use tobacco (vapour products), why shouldn't I?

- Nicotine is incredibly addictive, and quitting is really hard. I don't want you to go through that.

I don't know what to say when someone asks me to vape.

- Let's think of some ways that you can turn down an offer if you are ever in an uncomfortable situation, like “I've vaped before and it irritates my lungs,” or “I'm not into that.”

Support is Available

- Ask for support from your health care provider. Also, other trusted and supportive adults, such as the school's Public Health Nurse, teachers, relatives, faith leaders, coaches, or counselors can help reinforce your message.

For more information:

- Contact the Middlesex-London Health Unit Smoke-Free Information Line at:
 - 519-663-5317 ext. 2673 or smokefreeinfo@mlhu.on.ca
- www.healthunit.com/e-cigarettes