

E-cigarettes and Youth: What Parents Need to Know



WHAT ARE E-CIGARETTES?

Electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes) are battery-powered devices that deliver nicotine, flavorings, and other ingredients to the user. Using e-cigarettes is sometimes called “vaping.” E-cigarettes do not create harmless “water vapor” – they create an aerosol that can contain harmful chemicals.

HOW MANY YOUTH ARE USING E-CIGARETTES?

- E-cigarettes have been the most commonly used tobacco product among U.S. youth since 2014.
- In 2018, CDC and FDA data showed that more than 3.6 million U.S. youth, including 1 in 5 high school students and 1 in 20 middle school students, were past-month e-cigarette users.
- During 2017 and 2018, e-cigarette use skyrocketed among youth, leading the U.S. Surgeon General to call the use of these products among youth an epidemic in the United States.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS FOR YOUTH?

- Most e-cigarettes contain nicotine, which is highly addictive. Nicotine exposure during adolescence can:
 - » Harm brain development, which continues until about age 25.
 - » Impact learning, memory, and attention.
 - » Increase risk for future addiction to other drugs.
- Young people who use e-cigarettes may be more likely to go on to use regular cigarettes.
- Many e-cigarettes come in kid-friendly flavors – including mango, fruit, and crème – which make e-cigarettes more appealing to young people.
- E-cigarette aerosol is not harmless. It can contain harmful substances, including:
 - » Nicotine
 - » Ultrafine particles
 - » Cancer-causing chemicals
 - » Flavorings that have been linked to lung disease
 - » Volatile organic compounds
 - » Heavy metals such as nickel, tin, and lead



