



## Youth and Vaping: Making Informed Choices

### What is vaping?

Vaping is when someone inhales and exhales (puffs) vapour from a battery-operated device. Vapes heat a liquid solution (for example e-liquid or e-juice) to produce a vapour. This vapour is inhaled through the mouth and into the lungs.

### Vaping is not harmful, right?

Vapes have been promoted as an alternative to smoking, because they don't contain tobacco and are not burnt like cigarettes. Vaping may be less harmful than cigarettes, but less harmful doesn't mean free of harm or safe! Most vaping products contain nicotine. Anyone can develop a physical dependence to nicotine. This means the body gets used to the amount of nicotine and can experience withdrawal symptoms when they stop using it. In teens, vaping nicotine can:

- Affect brain development, learning, memory, attention, concentration, and behaviour
- Worsen symptoms of depression and anxiety
- Lead to prolonged use or a transition to cigarettes (which contain tobacco) and associated with negative health impacts.

### Are there chemicals in vapes?

Yes. Vaping can expose you to harmful chemicals and metals. Some chemicals found in vaping liquid, like vegetable glycerin and propylene glycol, are safe for use in products like cosmetics but the long-term safety of inhaling these substances is unknown.

Drinking e-liquid nicotine can result in nicotine poisoning and even death, especially with young children and pets. If you think someone has been exposed to toxic amounts of nicotine, please call Ontario Poison Centre at 1-800- 268-9017.

### Can vaping products help you quit smoking?

No vapour product to treat nicotine dependence has been approved by Health Canada. The evidence around using vapour products to stop smoking tobacco cigarettes is limited. People who are interested in reducing or quitting smoking can discuss their quit goals with a healthcare professional. Find out where and how to access help in the community by visiting [OttawaPublicHealth.ca/MentalHealthSubstancesResources](https://OttawaPublicHealth.ca/MentalHealthSubstancesResources).

### What are the health risks?

Research on vaping is emerging. This means the long-term health impacts are still unknown. Short-term health effects may include mouth or throat irritation, cough, shortness of breath, headache, nausea, vomiting and or diarrhea



## How can I reduce the risk?

Know the facts and how vaping can affect health can help you make informed choices.

- Avoid using any vaping products from illegal or unregulated sources.
- Do not modify vaping products or add any substances to these products.
- Read and follow safety instructions provided with e-cigarettes and e-juice.
- Choose products with child-resistant packaging and store out of reach of children and pets to minimize the risk of nicotine poisoning.
- Only vape outdoors (not in public spaces) and to be cautious about using vaping products around others due to the potential harms of second-hand exposure.
- Monitor yourself for symptoms affecting your lung health and let your healthcare provider know you vape.

## What are the laws around vaping?

Under the Smoke-Free Ontario Act, 2017, it is against the law to:

- Sell or supply tobacco and vapour products to anyone under the age of 19
- Use a fake ID to purchase tobacco or vapour products
- Vape or hold an activated e-cigarette in certain places, including public and private schools and public areas within 20 meters of school grounds, playgrounds, or the grounds of community recreational facilities.

## Where can I get help?

If you or a friend need help reducing or quitting vaping, talk to someone you trust. This could be a family member, teacher, coach or guidance/addictions counsellor. If you are not ready to talk to someone you know, you can connect with a counsellor at Youth Services Bureau by calling 613-260-2360 or visiting [www.ysb.ca](http://www.ysb.ca). Any conversation you have is private. If you are experiencing vaping related symptoms or are concerned about your health, contact your health care provider.