



PREVENTING EARLY NICOTINE & TOBACCO USE

A TOOLKIT FOR PARENTS & GUARDIANS



24/7
TWENTY-FOUR-SEVEN

ABOUT NICOTINE

WHAT ARE THE TYPES OF NICOTINE/TOBACCO PRODUCTS?



SMOKED TOBACCO PRODUCTS

These products produce smoke that is inhaled by the user and by those nearby through secondhand exposure. Common examples include manufactured cigarettes, hand-rolled cigarettes, waterpipes (shisha), cigars, cigarillos, and heated tobacco products (devices that heat tobacco to create an inhalable aerosol).



SMOKELESS NICOTINE PRODUCTS

These are nicotine products that are not smoked but are used in other ways, such as being placed in the mouth, chewed, applied to the gums, or inhaled through the nose. Examples include chewing tobacco, snus, nicotine pouches, and snuff.



ELECTRONIC CIGARETTES

Also known as e-cigarettes or vapes, these are battery-powered devices that heat a nicotine-containing liquid (often called vape juice) to create an aerosol, which is then inhaled by the user.

Source: World Health Organization. (2023). Types of nicotine and tobacco products.
https://www.who.int/docs/default-document-library/2-types-of-tobacco-and-nicotine-products.pdf?sfvrsn=88bee704_3

WHAT ARE VAPES?

Vapes are electronic devices that heat a liquid to create an aerosol (often called “vapor”) that is inhaled. They come in many shapes and sizes—from large, customizable devices (“mods”), to pen-style vapes that charge via USB, to small, disposable versions.

The Anatomy of Vapes



WHAT ARE IN VAPES?

E-cigarettes (vapes) heat a liquid—often called e-liquid or vape juice—that typically contains nicotine, propylene glycol, flavorings, and other chemicals. Some vapes also contain THC. Because these products are not consistently regulated by the FDA, the exact ingredients can vary.

HARMFUL SUBSTANCES FOUND IN E-CIGARETTES

NICOTINE

A highly addictive drug that harms adolescent brain development.

DIACETYL

Linked to a serious lung disease known as “popcorn lung” (bronchiolitis obliterans).

DIETHYLENE GLYCOL

A toxic chemical used in antifreeze, associated with lung disease.

CARCINOGENS

Cancer-causing substances like formaldehyde and acetaldehyde.

BENZENE

A chemical found in car exhaust and linked to cancer.

PROPYLENE GLYCOL

A chemical used in food but also found in antifreeze, paint solvents, and fog machines.

HEAVY METALS

Including nickel, tin, and lead, which can damage the lungs and other organs.

CADMIUM

A poisonous metal also found in cigarettes that can cause respiratory problems.

ULTRAFINE PARTICLES

Tiny particles that can lodge deep in the lungs, potentially causing long-term harm.

ACROLEIN

A weed-killing herbicide that can cause permanent lung damage.

Source: American Lung Association. (2025, April 8). What’s in an e-cigarette? <https://www.lung.org/quit-smoking/e-cigarettes-vaping/whats-in-an-e-cigarette>

IS VAPING HARMFUL FOR TEENS?



Yes!

Using nicotine before age 25 is particularly risky because the brain is still developing. Nicotine can interfere with key areas of the brain responsible for attention, learning, mood regulation, and impulse control. Early exposure also increases the risk of developing a lifelong addiction, as nicotine is highly addictive—especially for adolescents.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2025, January 31). Health effects of vaping. <https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/e-cigarettes/health-effects.html>

WHAT ARE THE HEALTH RISKS OF VAPING?

NICOTINE ADDICTION

Nicotine is highly addictive—especially for teens. It can interfere with brain development and affect learning, mood regulation, and impulse control.

LUNG AND HEART PROBLEMS

E-cigarettes contain harmful chemicals like acrolein, diacetyl, diethylene glycol, benzene, and heavy metals, which have been linked to lung damage, worsening asthma, bronchitis, and infections. Nicotine also raises heart rate and blood pressure, increasing the risk of heart disease.

Source: American Cancer Society. (2024, November 19). E-cigarettes and vaping. <https://www.cancer.org/cancer/risk-prevention/tobacco/e-cigarettes-vaping.html>

WHAT ARE THE WARNING SIGNS?

NICOTINE USE

According to the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, more than 1 in 4 high school students in New Mexico currently use e-cigarettes. That's why it's so important for parents to be aware of the warning signs that may indicate their teen is using nicotine products, such as:

CHANGES IN MOOD

Nicotine addiction can cause mood swings, irritability, and impulsive or risk-taking behavior.

STRUGGLES AT SCHOOL

Vaping can affect memory, focus, and learning. If your teen is suddenly having trouble in school, vaping could be a factor.



These signs can sometimes be mistaken for typical teen behavior, but if several of them appear at once, it may be worth a closer look. If you notice these changes or come across unfamiliar devices, it's a good time to start a conversation.

“1 in 4 high school students in New Mexico currently use e-cigarettes.”

Sources: Let's Talk Vaping. (n.d). Vaping: The facts. <https://www.letstalkvaping.com/vaping-facts>

HOW TO TALK TO YOUR TEEN

Talking to your kids about vaping can be challenging, but it can be a great way to prevent a vaping addiction. It can also help provide a safe and understanding environment for youth to have trusting adults they can come to. Let's go over how to make sure you are having a helpful and effective conversation.

CREATE A WELCOMING AND SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT

- Look for ways you can naturally bring up issues like vaping in everyday conversations.
- Try talking during car rides, walks, while running errands, etc.
- If a conversation becomes upsetting for either of you, table it for another time when you are both calm.

BE SUPPORTIVE AND AVOID BEING CRITICAL

- Show your concern where it's needed without expressing judgment.
- Expressing you are worried is okay, but avoid stating that you're disappointed with them for a thought or action.
- Keep body language relaxed and words neutral.

BE A GOOD LISTENER

- Let them say what they are thinking, and allow time for them to fully voice their thoughts.
- Encourage them to ask questions, and ask questions about the things they say to gain clarification.

BE FACT-DRIVEN

- Scare tactics are less effective than giving statistics and compelling facts. Give youth good reasons to avoid vaping without trying to scare them about it. Use neutral body language and words.

BE A GOOD EXAMPLE

- Ask loved ones who vape if they can try to limit their use around your kid.
- Use patience! Frustration is natural, but directing that frustration at your teen or yourself isn't helpful. Give yourself and your teen some grace as you continue having these conversations.

QUESTIONS YOU CAN ASK YOUR TEEN

- Do you know what vapes/cigarettes are?
- What have you heard about them?
- Are you aware of how vaping/smoking can impact your health?
- What causes your desire to vape or smoke? How does it make you feel?

QUESTIONS YOUR TEEN MIGHT ASK YOU

WHAT'S SO BAD ABOUT VAPING/ SMOKING?

- Cigarettes and vapes contain addictive ingredients that can harm your health.
- Your brain is still not fully developed, which makes vaping while you're young more dangerous and increases your risk for becoming addicted.

ISN'T VAPING SAFER THAN SMOKING CIGARETTES?

- Nicotine products are dangerous regardless of the type.
- Vapes are easy to use everywhere—indoors, at school events, etc. Sometimes people who vape find they vape more frequently than they used to smoke.

YOU VAPE/SMOKE, WHY SHOULDN'T I?

- I know firsthand how nicotine addiction can negatively impact the body, the brain, and my relationships. I wish I never started.
- Quitting is/was one of the most difficult things to do. If I never started, I would never have to go through the process of quitting.

HOW CAN I SAY NO TO FRIENDS WHO ASK ME TO SMOKE OR VAPE?

- Good friends will support your decision to do what you want with your body and won't judge you!
- Offer alternatives to hanging out with them like walks, going to the movies, or finding new hobbies and activities to enjoy together.

Source: Let's Talk Vaping. (n.d.). <https://www.letstalkvaping.com/>

HOW TO HELP YOUR TEEN QUIT VAPING

HELP YOUR TEEN QUIT VAPING FOR GOOD WITH LIVE VAPE FREE

Live Vape Free is a program that offers judgment-free support and powerful resources to help youth kick vaping to the curb. Join for free and help your teen take back control over their life!

KEEP TALKING ABOUT VAPING

First, make talking with you a safe and positive experience by maintaining a positive tone, keeping the conversation casual, and using facts. Pushing them to quit if they are not ready might not be very successful, but make sure they know that they can come to you for support and advice during this journey.

MAKING A QUIT PLAN

ONCE THEY ARE READY, HERE'S HOW YOU CAN HELP THEM MAKE A QUIT PLAN.

✓ IDENTIFY THE TRIGGERS

Have the teen think through and write down some of the triggers that lead them to want to vape or smoke. Examples of triggers could be school, social life, hobbies, self-image issues, etc.

✓ IDENTIFY ALTERNATIVES

Next, you can work with them to brainstorm alternatives to vaping when those triggers come up.

- **Find new hobbies:** exercise, reading, writing, hanging out with friends, etc.
- **Substitute hand and mouth actions:** chewing gum, chewing toothpicks, doodling, using fidget toys or stress balls, sipping water or tea, eating candy, deep breathing, etc.

✓ BUILD A SUPPORT SYSTEM

Identify friends and family who can help create a safe, nonjudgmental space for them to talk about struggles during this process.

Different roles in this support system can be:

- **Emotional Support:** someone to go to when they want to vent without judgment or criticism.
- **Practical Support:** someone to ask for help with various everyday tasks, like homework, chores, or meals, in times when things are difficult.
- **Fun Friend:** someone to help distract from the stress of quitting by engaging in other fun hobbies or activities.
- **Mentor:** someone close to them who used to vape or smoke and has reasons and facts to share.

✓ SET A GOAL FOR THE DATE THEY'LL QUIT

- Ideally this will be roughly two weeks from when they decided to quit so they can practice substitutions, distractions, and managing their urges.
- Once the date is chosen, put it in your calendars to help keep track of progress.
- If the date needs to change because they aren't ready, that's okay! Encourage them to choose a new date and keep working toward the new goal.

✓ THROW IT AWAY!

- Work with the teen to see if they're comfortable with throwing away everything that reminds them of vaping or nicotine. Discard vapes, cigarettes, other nicotine products and anything else that triggers them.
- Social situations where others are vaping could be especially difficult. Remind your teen that it's okay for them to ask friends to respect their quitting journey and limit use around them.

✓ BE PATIENT

- Many people struggle with quitting on the first try. It's okay to slip up! Forgive your kid and help them start the process again when they're ready.

Source: Live Vape Free. (n.d.). Your quit vaping action plan. <https://livevapefree.com/info/teen-quit-vaping-action-plan-updated.pdf>



CREATE A SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT

Source: 24/7 New Mexico. (n.d.). <https://247newmexico.com/>

As a parent, one thing you can do is make sure your teen's school district has a comprehensive tobacco and nicotine policy, and that they are enforcing it well. As of November 2023, all public school districts and charters in New Mexico must meet standards for a 100% nicotine-free policy! If you want to ensure your district is up to date on this policy, contact info@247newmexico.com.

LIVE VAPE FREE™



See how else we're protecting teens

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