



Department of Education

Department of Health

# THE FACTS ABOUT VAPING

Electronic cigarettes or e-cigarettes, often called 'vapes', are electronic devices designed to deliver vapourised liquids into the lungs. There are many different styles of vapes available and they can be difficult to spot.

The main ingredient in vapes is propylene glycol, vegetable glycerine or glycerol, and they often also contain nicotine, flavours and other chemicals. Vapes may contain harmful chemicals that aren't listed on the pack.

The biggest misunderstanding about vapes is that they are harmless compared to cigarettes. This is not true. **Vapes are not safe.**

## DO YOU KNOW WHAT THEY'RE VAPING?



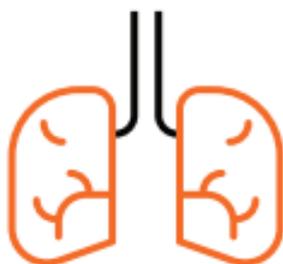
Many vapes contain nicotine making them **very addictive**



The nicotine in 1 vape can **= 50 cigarettes**



Young people who vape are **3 times** as likely to take up smoking



Vaping has been linked to **serious lung disease**



Vapes can contain the same **harmful chemicals** found in cleaning products, nail polish remover, weed killer and bug spray



Vapes come in a variety of designs and styles and can be **easy to conceal**

## VAPES APPEAL TO YOUNG PEOPLE

The flavours (such as watermelon, grape, caramel, bubble-gum, vanilla and mint) and colourful packaging used for vapes make them appealing to young people. **Many vapes also contain nicotine, which young people can become addicted to very quickly.**

Tobacco companies are continuously looking for new customers. Vapes are a new way to get young people addicted to nicotine, which is often difficult to quit.



## HOW BIG IS THE PROBLEM?

As you may be aware, the uptake of vaping by young people is increasing. Research shows that in WA, **13.5% of school students aged 12 to 17 years have tried an e-cigarette.**

Of those who had tried 2 out of 3 (66%) had not used one in the last 30 days. Young people who vape are 3 times as likely to take up smoking cigarettes.

## NICOTINE IS HARMFUL FOR YOUNG PEOPLE



Nicotine is a drug that is often in vapes and is highly addictive for young brains.

**It can cause long-lasting negative effects on brain development.**

Nicotine changes the way brain synapses are formed in young people.

The impacts can include impaired attention, learning, memory, and changes in mood.

## RISKS TO PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH

Vapes may expose young people to chemicals and toxins at levels that have the potential to cause negative health effects. **Vapes can leave a young person at increased risk of depression and anxiety.** Vaping has also been linked to serious lung disease. Importantly, many of the long-term harms of vaping are still unknown. The liquid in vapes and the vapour is not water. Vapes can expose young people to:

- the same harmful chemicals found in cleaning products, nail polish remover, weed killer and bug spray.
- toxins such as formaldehyde and heavy metals.
- ultrafine particles that can be inhaled deep into the lungs.
- flavouring chemicals such as diacetyl (a chemical linked to serious lung disease).

Vapes have even been known to explode causing serious burns.



## DO YOU KNOW WHAT THEY'RE VAPING?

## THE LAWS AROUND SELLING VAPES IN WA

It is reported that young people often purchase vapes online, from retail stores or from friends and contacts in the community. However, it is illegal in WA to sell e-cigarette devices and nicotine vaping products to anyone regardless of age, unless they are prescribed by a doctor for smoking cessation purposes and obtained with a prescription from a pharmacy.

In WA e-cigarette devices and their components, whether or not they contain nicotine, cannot be sold by tobacco or general retailers. It is also illegal to sell vapes to friends at school or in the community. If you suspect someone is selling vapes or e-cigarettes and their components, you can report it to the Department of Health by emailing [TobaccoPolicy@health.wa.gov.au](mailto:TobaccoPolicy@health.wa.gov.au).

### IS YOUR CHILD VAPING?

You may not know your child is vaping as vapes are small and resemble common items like highlighters, pens and USB drives. They are also not easy to smell.

Tell-tale **signs that your child might be vaping include the symptoms of nicotine addiction** such as your child feeling irritable or anxious. If your child is vaping, encourage them to stop and let them know that help is available and you are there for them. Stopping vaping can sometimes be hard and your child may need advice from a GP.

It also helps to set a good example by being tobacco and vape-free yourself.



### MISLEADING AND DANGEROUS LABELLING

Vaping products are often not labelled or are incorrectly labelled.

The labels may state that vapes are nicotine free, but **many of these products contain nicotine and a lot of other chemicals.**

They just don't put it on the pack.



### THE IMPORTANCE OF TALKING TO YOUR CHILD

If you suspect your child is vaping, take the time to talk to them about it and help them understand all of the risks.

As vaping is often common in schools, they may see it as a normal or safe thing to do, but that is not the case.

**It is important to let your child know the risks of vaping.** Try to start the conversation with your child in a relaxed easy-going way, perhaps taking the cue from around you, such as a note from school, a news story about it, or seeing people vaping on the street. And have your facts ready.

## DO YOU KNOW WHAT THEY'RE VAPING?

[education.wa.edu.au](http://education.wa.edu.au)



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There are many different styles of electronic cigarettes or 'vapes' available.

The biggest misunderstanding about vapes is that they are harmless compared to cigarettes.

**This is not true. Vapes are not safe.** Spotting vapes can be difficult because they often resemble common school items like highlighter pens, markers and USB drives. Knowing the different shapes and types of vapes is a first step to help protect young people from the risks of vaping.

## COMMON VAPES



Disposable vapes are the most common vapes used by young people. They can contain between 300 to over 4,000 'puffs' in each device. They often range in price from \$15 to \$50, depending on the number of 'puffs' the device contains. Many of these vapes contain nicotine, despite often not being labelled as containing nicotine.



Vapes can also come in pod-style or refillable devices, where the user refills the device with e-liquids or new pods containing e-liquids. These devices don't seem to be as popular with young people.

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