

VAPES/E-CIGARETTES: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

What is an electronic cigarette or e-cigarette?

An electronic cigarette or e-cigarette is a battery powered device that heats a liquid chemical into a vapour that can be inhaled. This is commonly called vaping and the liquid chemical is called e-liquid. E-liquid contains propylene glycol, flavouring, and other additives that come in a pre-filled or refillable container (e-cartridge). E-liquid does not contain tobacco, however, most of these products contain nicotine which is the addictive substance found in cigarettes.

There are many models of vaping products which come in a variety of shapes and styles, and new products are emerging. They are often referred to by different names such as vapes, vape pens, dab pens, mods, tanks, sub-ohms or e-hookahs.

What are the concerns with e-cigarettes?

HEALTH RISKS

Research has demonstrated there are both short and long-term health risks. Although e-cigarettes may have fewer chemicals than tobacco cigarettes, vaping is not harmless. There are components that are known to be harmful to your health. For example:

- Most e-liquids contain nicotine which can be highly addictive
- Some e-cartridges contain as much nicotine as one pack of cigarettes
- Some bottles of e-liquid contain enough nicotine to cause nicotine poisoning which can cause serious harm to a child, adult or an animal when absorbed through the mouth, eyes or skin
- Other chemicals such as formaldehyde, acrolein, propylene glycol and artificial flavorings are present
- Nicotine can alter teenage brain development and effect memory, concentration, impulse control and mood swings
- The vapour produced by e-cigarettes can be an irritant to the throat, lungs and eyes
- Vaping can cause coughing, wheezing, worsening of asthma symptoms, shortness of breath and chest pain
- E-cigarettes are also used to inhale other substances such as cannabis
- It is unknown what health risks can come from the second-hand vapour
- Evidence has shown that youth who vape often go on to smoke cigarettes

LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

Federally, the Tobacco and Vaping Products Act (TVPA) was enacted on May 23, 2018 to regulate the manufacture, sale, labelling and promotion of tobacco and vaping products sold in Canada.

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The logo for York Region, featuring a stylized white star or flame shape above the text "York Region" in a white serif font, all set against a purple background.

York Region

Provincially, the Smoke-Free Ontario Act 2017 places restrictions on the promotion, display and sale of tobacco and vaping products. This includes:

- Prohibiting the sale and supply of e-cigarettes to anyone under 19 years of age
- Prohibiting the sale of vaping products where the sale of tobacco is banned
- Prohibiting the use of e-cigarettes in places where smoking tobacco is banned such as school grounds, enclosed workplaces, restaurant patios and certain public spaces such as playgrounds and sporting areas
- Prohibiting the sale of flavoured tobacco products (except wine, port and rum flavours)
- Prohibiting the sale of flavoured vapour products in convenience stores (except tobacco flavour and mint flavour)
- Prohibiting the sale of vapour products which contain nicotine levels greater than 20mg/ml

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- Public use of e-cigarettes may make smoking appear more common and socially acceptable, weaken the efforts of tobacco law and policy, and provide a visual trigger to ex-smokers causing relapse
- E-cigarette use (vaping) may cause people to start smoking cigarettes or other substances
- Strong marketing to youth, popularity and use in public spaces can influence young people to try e-cigarettes
- E-cigarette use by teens is increasing at alarming rates

Can e-cigarettes help you quit smoking?

Some evidence suggests the use of e-cigarettes may help to quit smoking. Vaping products do deliver nicotine in a less harmful way than smoking. However, there is a risk that individuals who smoke may begin to use both e-cigarettes and tobacco cigarettes rather than quit smoking. Quit smoking medications along with support and a quit plan can more than double the chances of quitting success. There are over the counter nicotine replacement therapies (NRT) as well as prescription quit smoking medications that are proven to be safe and effective in helping people quit.

For assistance with quitting please call York Region Public Health at 1-877-464-9675 or email the Tobacco-Free Living Program at tobaccofreeliving@york.ca.

