

#e-cigarettesandvaping
#publichealth5-19service



E-CIGARETTES AND VAPING FACTSHEET

This factsheet will provide you with information about e-cigarettes (sourced from Public Health England) and links to other useful websites.

There are 2.5 million e-cigarette users across the country. 1.7% of 11-18 year olds reported at least weekly use in the UK in 2018.

What is an e-cigarette?

An e-cigarette (vapouriser or vape) is a gadget that allows you to inhale nicotine in a vapour rather than smoke. They work by heating a solution (e-liquid) that typically contains nicotine, propylene glycol and/or vegetable glycerine, and flavourings. The nicotine is provided through the vapour. They don't burn tobacco and don't produce tar or carbon monoxide (two of the most harmful substances in tobacco smoke). Using an e-cigarette is known as vaping.

There are different models of e-cigarettes, they all contain batteries:

- **Cigalikes:** look similar to tobacco cigarettes, can be disposable or rechargeable.
- **Vape pens:** shaped like a pen or small tube, have a tank to store e-liquid and replaceable coils.
- **Mods:** come in a range of shapes and sizes but are generally the largest e-cigarette type.

Are e-cigarettes harmful?

Vaping is around 95% less harmful than smoking. Public Health England (the experts responsible for protecting and improving our nation's health and wellbeing) report that e-cigarettes are not completely risk free, but that vaping is far less harmful than smoking. This is also the view of other professionals including the Royal College of Physicians, Cancer Research UK and the US National Academy of Sciences. E-cigarette vapour does contain some chemicals also found in tobacco smoke, but at much lower levels.

Public Health England have also found that to date there are no identified health risks of passive vaping to the health of bystanders. Especially when compared with secondhand tobacco smoke which is known to be harmful. E-cigarettes don't release a side-stream vapour into the air.

The UK has one of the most thorough systems of regulation for e-cigarettes in the world, products are subject to quality and safety standards, as well as packaging and labelling requirements. It is illegal for persons under the age of 18 to purchase tobacco and nicotine products (e-cigarettes). It is also illegal for adults to purchase them on behalf under 18 year olds.

Can e-cigarettes help you to quit smoking?

Growing evidence also suggests that using an e-cigarette can be one of the most effective ways to quit smoking. Although e-cigarettes contain nicotine (an addictive substance and the reason people become addicted to smoking in the first place) most of the harm from smoking comes from the thousands of toxic chemicals found in cigarette smoke rather than the nicotine. Nicotine replacement therapy has been used safely for many years to help people give up smoking. Using an e-cigarette can help manage nicotine cravings. The best chance of quitting successfully is to use your local stop smoking service along with a quit aid. They will provide expert advice about which aid to use, the right strength of nicotine in the e-liquid as well as face to face support.

Should I vape?

The key health message is clear. There is evidence that vaping and e-cigarettes are considerably less harmful than smoking tobacco but there is still a risk so if you're not a smoker, don't start and don't vape.

VISIT THESE USEFUL WEBSITES

www.nhs.uk/live-well/quit-smoking/quitting-smoking-under-18s-guide/

NHS webpage that provides information and advice about quit smoking for young people

www.ash.org.uk/home/

Action on smoking and health website has links to other resources and websites to provide information around the effects of smoking and how to quit

<https://www.nhs.uk/smokefree/help-and-advice/e-cigarettes>

NHS webpage providing advice about stop smoking and e-cigarettes

www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/you-your-body/drugs-alcohol-smoking/smoking/

Webpage from Childline with information about effects of smoking and quitting