

VAPING

Vaping devices (also known as “e-cigarettes”) are electronic devices that turn liquids into an aerosol which is inhaled.

Some think that the mist from vaping is a vapour, it is not a vapour, it is an aerosol. Aerosols are a fine spray of chemicals that enter the body through the lungs and small particles can stay in the lungs.

Fact: 30% of Limestone Coast Year 10's have vaped in their lifetime (2021 Planet Youth School Survey)

The number of young people using vapes is rapidly growing and social media is being used by tobacco and e-cigarette companies to sell them.

Vaping was first introduced as a way to reduce the habit of smoking cigarettes, yet some young people go on to smoke cigarettes because they now have a dependency to nicotine after using vapes.

What's in a vape?

There are no standards to ensure quality control or safety for the sale of vapes in Australia. There are also no requirements for listing the substances being inhaled on vapes.

Flavouring agents such as mango, blueberry or cinnamon make the taste appealing and they cover the other chemical's odour.

Vapes can contain toxic heavy metals like nickel, chromium and lead, chemicals used in nail polish remover, weed killer and bug spray, arsenic, and formaldehyde.

Unregulated disposable vapes have become increasingly popular with young people and are frequently mislabeled as nicotine free despite often containing nicotine.

Most vapes contain nicotine.



Vaping and social media

Social media platforms support the promotion and glamourising of the use of vapes.

Images of influencer's and celebrities using their vapes, doing tricks and challenges with promotional giveaways saturate social media pages. These images support the theory of fear of missing out (fomo) and being "in" with the group and trends and could be one of the primary reasons for young people engaging in vaping.

Following the implementation of 2019 government legislation it is illegal to sell vapes to minors but they are now purchased on line and often directly through social media.

Social media has subsequently evolved into the foremost platform for purchasing vapes for young people.

Unintended consequences of regulating vape products is the emergence of illegal vapes via the black market, potentially increasing the availability for young people, and increasing the appeal to use.



How vapes are bought online

Any search button on a social media platform can lead people to vape sellers who will deliver or post directly to your home.



Many of the people running these accounts are likely to be importing their vapes wholesale from China.

Some wholesalers will sell face to face in their community and organise to meet buyers using Snapchat to organise the time and place. Most of these accounts rely on word of mouth and operate frequently and conspicuously.

The minimum age to use Snapchat is 13 years.

Risks - Legality - Safety - Harms

- › Buying an e-cigarette or liquid nicotine is illegal in Australia unless the person has a doctor's prescription.
- › Most e-cigarettes and e-liquids that don't show nicotine on their label in Australia, do in fact have nicotine.
- › There are no quality or safety standards for e-cigarettes or nicotine free liquids, meaning they are not regulated or checked.
- › Unregulated e-cigarettes have an unknown nicotine concentration.
- › The nicotine in 1 e-cigarette can equal 50+ cigarettes.
- › Vaping may worsen asthma, bronchitis and coughs.
- › Nicotine harms the way the teenage brain grows which can affect memory and concentration, the reward pathways, learning and mood.
- › Dependence to nicotine
- › Young people are being suspended or expelled from school due to vaping. Disengagement from school and education is a risk factor for a range of health and social harms.

Potential benefits

- › There is evidence that nicotine vaping is more effective for adults looking to quit smoking cigarettes, other than other forms of nicotine replacement therapy.

Responding to young people who are vaping

- › Responses to vaping should align with similar responses to smoking tobacco
- › Choose the right time and place and find a calm and private setting where you can have an uninterrupted conversation with your child.
- › Avoid confrontational or stressful situations as these will lead to defensive responses.
- › Defensive responses will quickly hamper your ability to be gentle, open and honest.
- › Show support and love, not punish or blame
- › Listen actively, give your child the opportunity to share their thoughts and feelings about vaping.
- › Pay attention to what they are saying, repeat what they are saying and ask open ended questions without judgement.
- › Let them know you are interested & want to know their views.
- › Are they dependent on nicotine? Consider providing support to them to speak with a GP to find out their options.
- › Health messages should be delivered in a balanced, factual way with no exaggeration.
- › Responses to vaping should not be more harmful to the young person than the act of vaping itself.
- › This includes the risks associated with disengagement from school because of suspension or expulsion.

As a parent you can

- › Do the above and...
- › Discuss your concerns and talk about how you know that vaping can affect their health, academic performance, and relationships and how this happens.
- › Highlight the specific times this has happened, focussing on the behaviour not the individual.
- › Set clear boundaries, rules and expectations regarding vaping.
- › Clearly communicate that you expect them to stop vaping and explain why.
- › Remain firm, consistent, calm and supportive.
- › Seek professional help for the quitting and withdrawal process.
- › Be a supportive presence through their quitting journey and express your pride and acknowledge their efforts.