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Vaping—What Parents Need to Know

As vaping grows in popularity, it is becoming a problem with young people. In fact, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) reported in 2020 that 19.6% of high school students (3.02 million) and 4.7% of middle school students (550,000) reported current e-cigarette use. Among current e-cigarette users, 38.9% of high school students and 20% of middle school students reported using e-cigarettes on 20 or more of the past 30 days. Although they may think it is cool to vape, how dangerous is it? Learning about the dangers of vaping and having the right tools to resist temptation are keys to breaking addiction to this dangerous habit.

What is vaping? Vaping is the inhaling of a vapor created by an electronic (e-cigarette) or other vaping device. E-cigarettes are battery-powered smoking devices. They have cartridges filled with a liquid that usually contains nicotine, flavorings, and chemicals. The liquid is heated into a vapor, which the person inhales. E-cigarettes are easy for youth to hide as they come in various forms and do not always look like a traditional cigarette. Some look like USB flash drives, pens, or other everyday items.

According to [KidsHealth.org](https://kidshealth.org), vaping

- puts nicotine into the body.
- is highly addictive and can slow brain development in kids and teens.
- affects memory, concentration, learning, self-control, attention, and mood.
- can increase the risk of other types of addiction as adults.
- irritates the lungs and may cause serious lung damage and even death.

Vaping causes serious physical and mental health effects. In fact, the health effects from vaping can be more dangerous than smoking cigarettes and cause higher chances of asthma, lung cancer and other lung diseases, according to the American Lung Association.

Possible signs that your child might be vaping include: Dried out mucus membranes; dried skin around the mouth and nose; nosebleeds; sleep disturbance; emotional problems; passing up caffeine.

How can young people quit vaping? According to [4-H Health Rocks](#), a Healthy Living program available online, youth need to set the stage and form reasons for quitting. Forming reasons helps one see the value in quitting. For example, they might consider how they would look, act, and think in a world without vaping.

Withdrawal from nicotine is not easy and forming a support group of friends or family with understanding and patience is key to helping a person break the habit. It is important to remember that youth make mistakes and can fall into the trap of vaping. Providing them with knowledge and resources is essential to kicking the vaping habit for good!

Sources: CDC, KidsHealth.org, American Lung Association, 4-H Health Rocks
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