

Is it better to vape than to smoke cigarettes?

Vaping was originally promoted as a harmless way for people to stop smoking harmful cigarettes. However, vaping is also dangerous and most vapes contain addictive nicotine like cigarettes do. A report by Australian National University found that, of current smokers:

- 53% still smoke cigarettes
- About 35.5% have previously smoked
- 15.5% have never smoked.
- Young people are 7 times more likely to take up smoking if they Vape

Is Vaping Legal in Australia?

In Australia it is illegal for anyone to buy vapes that contain nicotine without a doctor's prescription. **It is illegal to sell vapes to anyone under 18.** However, labelling on vapes is often incomplete and often doesn't include the nicotine which is present. It appears to be easy for people, even children, to obtain vapes containing nicotine. The Australian Government is currently aware of this.

Second-hand vaping

The steam emitted from vapes is not just water vapour. It contains harmful chemicals that were in the vapes, especially carcinogenic (cancer causing) substances like formaldehyde that people nearby inhale.

Some of these harmful substances stick to clothing and in bathrooms.



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VAPING

A vape is an e-cigarette, a vaping machine that consists of a battery, atomizer and e-liquid and, when used, produces vapour (not just water vapour) instead of smoke. Each vape pod is the equivalent of about 22 cigarettes.



Vaping is harmful. Vapes produce ultra-fine particles and contain 100s of ingredients including usually nicotine, benzene (found in car exhausts), formaldehyde (used to store animal specimens), and metals like nickel, tin, and lead, as well as sometimes marijuana, cocaine, opioids, psychedelics, and amphetamines. Manufacturers (often cigarette manufacturers) aim to attract teenage users by adding enticing fruity flavours to make teens think that they are harmless or even good for them. In fact, studies in 2016 and 2018 found that more than 50 of these flavourings have ingredients that are irritating to the throat and lungs.

Because vaping is relatively new, it is too soon to know all the harm that it will do. It will take many years before its effect on e.g. cancer, will be clear.

VAPING AND THE HUMAN BODY

Effects on lungs

Studies show that vaping irritates lungs. **E-VALI** (e-cigarette and vaping acquired lung injury) is now a recognised medical problem caused by smoking vapes containing nicotine.

Studies suggest that even nicotine-free vaping can irritate the respiratory system, cause cell death, trigger inflammation and harm blood vessels.

In 2019, research through multiple studies by Johns Hopkins Medicine reported a link between e-cigarettes and increased odds for developing asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. January 21, 2020, the CDC (Centre for Disease Control) had confirmed that vaping was associated with 60 deaths in the United States and more than 1000 cases of E-VALI. The symptoms of the lung disease resulting from vaping include coughing, shortness of breath, chest pain, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, fatigue, and stomach pain.

Daniel, 17, in USA, had been vaping several times a day and developed severe lung problems as a result. He required a complete lung transplant to save his life.

Poisoning, seizures, and burns also occur with vaping.

Effect on the brain

The brain continues to change and pathways develop until a person is in their mid-20s. Nicotine is very addictive, and nicotine use during adolescence can change the structure and function of the brain. It affects the developing attention, learning, memory, mood, impulse control, and mental health. The habit of puffing on a vape develops, becoming an addiction.

Effect on the mouth: Vaping can increase the risk of tooth cavities and gum disease.

Effect on the heart

Some studies have shown that taking a puff of a nicotine e-cigarette can cause an immediate increase in heart rate and blood pressure. Different studies in 2017, 2018 and 2019 found that vaping did increase a person's risk of heart disease.

