

Vaping and Electronic Cigarettes

What is vaping?

Vaping is the inhaling of vapour from an electronic cigarette. There are many types of vape being used in the UK, ranging from vape pens, pod systems to disposable vapes.

The vapour inhaled by the user normally contains nicotine, but they are also available without. They come in a variety of flavours, branding and styles. The level of nicotine in the product depends on a number of factors, but products purchased legally in the UK are required by law to have no more than 20mg/ml.

It is illegal for a young person under the age of 18 to be sold a nicotine containing vape, however it is not illegal for a young person to vape.

Most children who try vaping have also tried smoking. About 10% of young people aged 11 to 15 years old have tried a vape, with experimentation increasing by age 18 to 41%. Since 2020, underage vaping has increased, whilst underage smoking has fallen. Regular vaping among young people has increased to 3.3% in young people aged 11 to 17 years¹.

What are the impacts?

Vaping can be an effective tool to help adults quit smoking. Whilst vaping is much less harmful than smoking, **vaping is not risk free and should be discouraged in children and young people who have never smoked.**

Breathing any product into your lungs unnecessarily is not ideal, and that's why non-smokers should not vape.

Whilst we can't yet be precise about the longer-term risks of vaping, they are likely to be much lower than smoking. For this reason, many adults have switched from cigarettes to vapes in recent years, substantially benefiting their health.

Most vapes contain nicotine, which is highly addictive. It is therefore possible for young people to become addicted to vaping. Recent evidence, however, suggests young people are less likely to become addicted to a vape than they are a cigarette.

Vaping does not appear to be a gateway to smoking.

How to talk to young people about vaping

The key message to young people is:

'Vaping is not for children. While it can help people quit smoking, if you don't smoke, don't vape'.

Vaping should be discussed within the context of tobacco, alcohol and drug misuse in schools, with young people who do not smoke, discouraged from experimenting with vapes.

Whilst conversations should focus on discouraging both smoking and vaping, care should also be taken to ensure that young people don't confuse the well-established and harmful risks of smoking with the reduced risks of vaping.

It is important not to inadvertently glamourise vapes in conversation and be clear that the laws on underage sales exist to protect young people from the potential to become addicted to nicotine.

Where can I get local advice and support?

No Limits - provide information, advice and counselling through a range of services. [Click here](#) or email SPL@nolimitshelp.org.uk.

Smokefree Hampshire - Children aged 12 or above can receive support from its [Stop Smoking Service](#) to quit smoking. This service offers free and confidential support from specialist stop smoking advisers, with access to medications such as nicotine replacement patches and gum. Children can access the service independently or with the support of an adult. Support is available face to face or by telephone. [Click here](#) or call the Quitline on 01264 563039 or text Quit to 66777.

Where can I get more advice from national resources?

There is currently no support available for young people to stop vaping, however the resources below may be helpful:

<i>Link and /or QR code</i>	<i>Description</i>
ASH brief for local authorities on youth vaping	A PDF document, produced by Action on Smoking and Health (ASH) , on youth vaping that addresses facts and myths. It is primarily for public health officials and trading standards officers, but also sets out important information for councillors, schools, parents and retailers.
ASH guidance for school vaping policies	Short guidance document for schools on vaping. Produced by Action on Smoking and Health (ASH) .
Use of e-cigarettes among young people in Great Britain 2022	Up-to-date prevalence facts on vaping and young people. Produced by Action on Smoking and Health (ASH) .

[Vaping Facts](#)

Vaping Facts is a New Zealand website outlining the facts about vaping and young people.

¹ [Use-of-e-cigarettes-among-young-people-in-Great-Britain-2022.pdf \(ash.org.uk\)](#)