

Vaping and Youth: What Health Care Providers Need to Know

It is unsafe for kids, teens, and young adults to use e-cigarettes (also known as vapes) and other tobacco products. As a health care provider, you can talk with your young patients about the risks of using these products.

What Can You Do as a Health Care Provider?

Health care providers have an important role in addressing youth tobacco use.

- Ask all young patients if they use any tobacco products, including e-cigarettes.
- Educate patients about the risks of tobacco use, including vaping.
- Most youth who vape want to quit and have tried. As you counsel young patients to quit, discuss treatment options and point them toward resources to help them quit.
- Learn more about the risks of vaping for young people and access a list of free resources at [CDC.gov/Vaping](https://www.cdc.gov/Vaping).

What Are E-Cigarettes, or Vapes?

E-cigarettes are devices that heat a liquid into an aerosol, which a person breathes in. The aerosol usually contains flavoring, nicotine, and other harmful and potentially harmful substances. These include:

- Cancer-causing chemicals
- Heavy metals such as nickel, tin, and lead
- Volatile organic compounds
- Flavorings
- Ultrafine particles that can be inhaled deep into the lungs



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There are many types of vapes, including disposable, rechargeable, and refillable devices. Some vapes can be modified to change the amount of aerosol produced, the strength of the delivered substance, or the substance that is delivered. Some companies specifically design and sell vapes to deliver cannabis.

Vapes come in many shapes, sizes, colors, and flavors—including fruit, candy, menthol, and mint—that appeal to young people. Youth may use different terms for vapes or refer to them by their brand names.



What Are the Risks of Vaping for Youth?

E-cigarettes typically contain nicotine, which is highly addictive.

- Nicotine can harm brain development, which continues until about age 25. Using nicotine during adolescence can harm the parts of the brain that control attention, learning, mood, and impulse control.
- Youth can start showing signs of nicotine addiction quickly, sometimes before the start of regular or daily use.
- Youth use of nicotine may increase the risk for future addiction to other substances. Young people who vape may also be more likely to go on to use regular cigarettes.
- Youth commonly report using e-cigarettes because they feel anxious, stressed, or depressed. Nicotine addiction or withdrawal can contribute to these feelings or make them worse. Youth may use tobacco products to relieve their symptoms, which can lead to a cycle of nicotine dependence.
- Nicotine withdrawal symptoms include irritability, restlessness, feeling anxious or depressed, trouble sleeping, problems concentrating, and nicotine cravings.

What Other Tobacco Products Do Youth Use?

E-cigarettes have been the most commonly used tobacco product among U.S. youth since 2014. However, youth might also use cigarettes, cigars, and smokeless tobacco, including nicotine pouches. About 30% of youth who report current tobacco use report using more than one type of product. Youth who use multiple products are at higher risk for developing nicotine dependence. They might also be more likely to continue tobacco use into adulthood.



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