

The Health Department calls attention to the potential harms of using electronic cigarettes or e-cigarettes, including nicotine addiction and exposure to chemicals, especially for youth and young adults. E-cigarettes are products that produce an aerosolized mixture – typically containing flavored liquids and nicotine – that is inhaled. Providers play an important role in educating patients on reducing exposure to potential toxins using proven effective and safe smoking cessation medications.

Do E-Cigarettes Help with Quitting?

Adults who are not currently using a tobacco product should not start using an e-cigarette. In addition to risk of addiction and exposure to toxic chemicals, there is potential harm from second-hand aerosol emissions.

The Health Department urges health professionals to recommend FDA-approved quit methods to their patients.

FDA-approved cessation medications for adults are transdermal nicotine skin patches, nicotine chewing gum, nicotine lozenges, Bupropion, Chantix, Zyban and Nicotrol nasal spray and oral inhaler.

The FDA does not recognize e-cigarettes as a device to help quit smoking. In the Academies Consensus Report there is limited evidence that e-cigarettes may be effective aids to promote smoking cessation.ⁱ

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention cautions that many adults are using e-cigarettes to quit smoking combustible cigarettes but continue to use both products, *called dual use*.

Support Patients in All Quit Attempts

E-cigarettes have the potential to benefit adult smokers if used as a complete substitute for cigarettes and other smoked tobacco products. Because smoking even a few cigarettes can be dangerous to health, quitting smoking completely is identified as very important to protect a patients' health.ⁱⁱ

Some patients may prefer e-cigarettes as a method to reduce and quit using cigarettes. Health professionals are advised to support all combustible tobacco quit attempts by patients and work with them to achieve cessation of any tobacco product use, including eventually e-cigarettes.ⁱⁱⁱ

E-Cigarettes: Never Safe for Youth

Nicotine exposure during adolescence can impact brain development, learning, memory and attention, and increase risk for future addiction to other drugs.^{iv,v} E-cigarette use increased from 11.7% to 20.8% among high school students, and from 3.3% to 4.9% among middle school students from 2017 to 2018.^{vi} According to the Consensus Report, there is substantial evidence that e-cigarette use increases risk of ever using combustible tobacco cigarettes among youth and young adults.

The FDA and other organizations, including the CDC, call upon health professionals to regularly screen for use of any tobacco product, including e-cigarettes. Encourage parents to discuss the risks of tobacco product use and potential addiction with their children and teens.

Recommendations for Providers

Educate parents, youth and the public.

E-cigarettes typically contain nicotine, a highly addictive and toxic substance that is especially harmful to youth, young adults and people who are pregnant. Harmful ingredients include ultrafine particles, heavy metals and flavorings such as diacetyl, a chemical linked to serious lung disease.^{iv}

Encourage cessation using proven quit aids.

Regularly screen, advise and refer patients to counseling and FDA-approved nicotine replacement therapy, available through private insurance, Medicaid and Vermont's Quitline, 1-800-QUIT-NOW.

Support patients in their quit attempts.

Visit 802quits.org/providers for free materials and resources.

ⁱ National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine. (2018). [*Public health consequences of e-cigarettes*](#). Washington, DC: The National Academies press.

ⁱⁱ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2019). Electronic Cigarettes, What's the Bottom Line? Retrieved from: https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/basic_information/e-cigarettes/pdfs/Electronic-Cigarettes-Infographic-508.pdf

ⁱⁱⁱ American Cancer Society. (2019). Position Statement on Electronic Cigarettes. Retrieved from: <https://www.cancer.org/healthy/stay-away-from-tobacco/e-cigarette-position-statement.html>

^{iv} Office of the Surgeon General. (2014). The Health Consequences of Smoking-50 Years of Progress: A Report of the Surgeon General. Atlanta, GA: US Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (US), National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health. <https://www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/reports/50-years-of-progress/full-report.pdf>

^v Office of the Surgeon General. (2016). E-cigarette Use among Youth and Young Adults: A Report of the Surgeon General. Washington, DC: US Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/sgr/e-cigarettes/pdfs/2016_sgr_entire_report_508.pdf

^{vi} Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2019). Tobacco Use by Youth is Rising. <https://www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns/youth-tobacco-use/index.html>