

As of 2020, nearly 1 in 5 U.S. high school students and 1 in 21 middle schoolers vaped. E-cigarettes (vaping devices) have created a new trend of nicotine addiction among teens. Here in Indiana, teens are now more likely to use vaping devices than cigarettes. The increase in vaping among youth is rising at such an alarming rate that the U.S. Surgeon General is calling it an epidemic that "demands action to protect the lives of young people."

E-cigarettes are smoking devices designed to simulate the sensation of smoking. Many of their e-liquid solutions contain nicotine, the addictive substance found in tobacco, which is harmful to developing brains, affecting attention, learning, mood, impulse control, and memory. Its use in youth can increase the risk for addiction to other drugs as well. Also, despite early claims that e-cigarettes were a healthier alternative to traditional cigarettes, they rely on aerosols that can contain heavy metals and cancer-causing agents. The FDA is currently investigating a link between seizures from nicotine overdose in youth caused by vaping.

### **Signs of Use**

One of the reasons vaping is on the rise is because it is easy to hide and the signs can be easy to miss. Unlike traditional cigarettes, e-cigarettes don't leave the telltale scent of tobacco. If you notice any of the following, talk with your child about whether or not they are vaping: presence of unfamiliar technology; online purchases or packaging; faint sweet or fruity scents; behavioral and mood changes; increased irritability or restlessness; increased thirst; and nosebleeds.

### **Why are Youth Vaping?**

Peer pressure and managing stress are some of the main reasons cited by youth for starting vaping. As teens learn how it makes them feel, they become addicted and use it to cope with stress, anxiety, and social situations. Other reasons teens experiment with e-cigarettes include: rebelliousness/independence; misinformation; social media influence; and/or close family or friend influences.

### **Help is Available**

Quitting the use of any form of nicotine is hardest during the first few weeks. There will be temptations to vape, withdrawal symptoms, and cravings. However, help is available.

"This is Quitting" is a free mobile program from the Truth Initiative designed to help young people quit vaping. The first-of-its-kind text messaging program incorporates messages from other youths who have attempted to, or successfully did, quit e-cigarettes. Truth's messages show the real side of quitting, both the good and the bad, to help youths feel motivated, inspired, and supported throughout the quitting process. They also send young people evidence-based tips and strategies to quit and stay quit. "This is Quitting" is tailored based on age (13- to 24-years old) and product usage, to give teens and young adults appropriate recommendations about quitting. To enroll in "This is Quitting" simply text DITCHVAPE to 88709.

As parents, you are the best line of defense when it comes to educating and protecting your children. Talk to them about vaping, before someone else does.

For more information, please visit our website at [drugfreeadamscounty.org](http://drugfreeadamscounty.org).