

Vaping

A hot topic for teens and young adults right now is vaping. While it may not sound like a big deal, vaping can in fact be quite harmful to the body. First-time users might try vapes because of the flavors, without realizing that with every pump of flavor comes a high dose of nicotine.

Beware – those flavors come at a high price.

Some vape devices use pods that contain as much nicotine as an entire pack of cigarettes. Vape pens can also be used to smoke marijuana oil and other drugs. More than 800 people have now become ill and a few have died after using vaping devices to inhale THC, nicotine or both.

Nicotine in your body and brain

Once inhaled, nicotine quickly enters the bloodstream, causing the heart to beat faster and blood pressure to rise. Nicotine harms your blood vessels and can lead to an increased risk for heart attack and stroke. It takes just a few seconds for nicotine to reach the brain and cause chemical reactions throughout the rest of your body.

It is important to understand that the human brain is not fully developed until age 25. Until then, the brain is more sensitive to nicotine. Nicotine harms the brain circuits that control attention and learning. These changes may lead to mood disorders and problems with impulse control, and can increase the risk of addiction to nicotine as well as to other drugs.

Signs of Addiction

Vapes may be discreet, but addiction is hard to hide. Some symptoms of addiction that may occur within the first few times of using a vape device include: a strong craving to vape; having a hard time concentrating at school or work because they want to vape; feeling irritable, nervous or restless when they can't vape; and not being able to stop or cut back on vaping even if they wanted to.

How To Talk To Teens About Vaping

1. Explain the health risks

There's a widespread misconception among teens that vaping is safe. Good advice is "Don't put something in your body if you don't know what's in it."

2. Establish open dialogue

Ask, 'Is vaping really popular in your school? How do you feel about it?' Parents need to understand the peer pressure that's happening.

3. Practice saying "no"

Help teens develop their own script for how they will deal with peer pressure when they inevitably encounter vaping in their peer group.

4. Get help

Become An Ex is a Truth Initiative resource for parents looking to help their child quit vaping. The program sends customized text messages to help them understand what their teen is going through emotionally and physiologically, and how they can be supportive. To join, text "QUIT" to 202-899-7550. For teen-specific social support, Truth Initiative developed *This Is Quitting* — a vaping cessation program for young people. To join, text "DITCHJUUL" to 88709.

For more information, please visit our website at www.drugfreeadamscounty.org.