



# HOW DO I TALK WITH MY TEEN ABOUT E-CIGS AND VAPES?

E-cigarettes, also called vapes, are a dangerous and fast-growing trend amongst teenagers. Below are some tips to help set the stage for an effective conversation about them.

## BEFORE THE TALK.

Spend time learning about e-cigs and the particular risks for young people.

## BE PATIENT AND READY TO LISTEN.

Be prepared to do more listening than talking, remembering that it's a conversation and not a lecture. It will be helpful if you can keep an open mind and show your genuine concern and interest.

## START THE CONVERSATION NATURALLY.

A more natural discussion, rather than a lecture, will increase the odds that your teen will listen. Rather than saying, "we need to talk," you might ask what your teen knows about vapes. Express how much you care by explaining why you're having the conversation and that you want to give your teen the support they need to make healthy choices.

## EXPRESS CONCERNS.

Should you suspect that your child may be vaping, share your concerns without sounding accusatory. Focus on concerning behavior and why it worries you. For example, "I have noticed that you have a cough" or "I have noticed a sweet fruity smell" or "I found an unusual charging device in our room and it's not for your phone." Focus on why this concerns you and that you are here to help them.

## SET CLEAR EXPECTATIONS ABOUT E-CIGS AND VAPES.

Make sure your child knows your rules—and that you'll enforce the consequences if rules are broken. Research shows that kids are less likely to use tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs if their parents have set clear rules and consequences for breaking those rules.

## TEACH THEM HOW TO SAY "NO."

Kids who don't know what to say when someone offers them tobacco or other drugs are more likely to give in to peer pressure. Help them be prepared should the situation arise. Let them know that they can always use you as an excuse and say, "No, my parents will kill me if I vape."

## HELP PROVIDE THEM WITH FACTUAL INFORMATION.

Don't just leave your child's anti-drug education up to their school. Ask your teen what they have learned about vapes and nicotine in school and continue the education with regular conversations.

# ANSWER THEIR QUESTIONS ABOUT E-CIGS AND VAPES.

Here are some questions and comments you might get from your teen about e-cigarettes and some ideas on how you can answer them.



## **"WHY DON'T YOU WANT ME TO USE E-CIGARETTES?"**

E-cigs might seem like a safer way to smoke, but they're not. The heated vapor contains many harmful ingredients that are inhaled directly into the lungs bypassing your body's filtration system. Even breathing second-hand e-cigarette vapor is dangerous. It's a dangerous trend that I am hoping we can spend more time talking about.

## **"I THOUGHT E-CIGARETTES DIDN'T HAVE NICOTINE – JUST WATER AND FLAVORING?"**

I used to think that too. But many e-cigs have large amounts of nicotine—even if the packaging says otherwise. While vaping produces no actual smoke, the poisonous vapor has been found to contain more than 2,000 ingredients—including propylene glycol, formaldehyde, arsenic, and cadmium. Many of these chemicals can cause cancer, harm your lungs and interfere with brain development. Vape pens are also used for concentrated THC oil—which is very harmful.

## **"WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL ABOUT NICOTINE?"**

Your brain is still developing until about age 24. Smoking before then greatly increases your chance of becoming addicted and can harm your developing brain. Using nicotine at your age may make it harder for you to concentrate, learn, or control your impulses. Nicotine can even train your brain to be more easily addicted to other drugs like meth and cocaine. I don't say this to scare you, but I want you to have the facts because nothing is more important to me than your health and safety.

## **"AREN'T E-CIGARETTES SAFER THAN CONVENTIONAL CIGARETTES?"**

Because your brain is still developing, studies show that it isn't safe for you to use any product that contains nicotine, including e-cigarettes. Whether you get nicotine from an e-cigarette or a cigarette, it's still risky.

## **"YOU USED TO SMOKE, SO WHY SHOULDN'T I?"**

If I could do it over again, I never would have started smoking. I learned that people who smoke cigarettes are much more likely to develop, and die from, certain diseases than people who don't smoke. This was really scary, so I quit smoking. Quitting was really hard, and I don't want you to go through that. The best thing is to not start at all.