

The Educator

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The Basics on E-Cigarettes

An E-Cig, or E-Cigarette, is a handheld electronic device that can be reusable or disposable. The device consists of 3 parts; a power source, a heating device, and a cartridge. Puffing activates the heating device which vaporizes the e-liquid, or juice. The act of inhaling is called vaping. The e-liquid comes in thousands of flavors; some of the flavors like Gummy Bear, Bubble Gum or Swedish Fish appeal directly to youth. E-liquid can contain different levels of nicotine from 0mg (no nicotine) to upwards of 24mg (like smoking several packs of cigarettes a day). The vapor can contain tiny amounts of carcinogens and heavy metals. The lasting harmful health effects of this are unknown.



Youth e-cigarette use is on the rise.

According to the Centers for Disease Control, between 2011 and 2015, past-month e-cigarette use grew dramatically among middle school and high school students. E-cigarettes are now the most commonly used form of tobacco by youth in the United States. Dual use, or use of e-cigarettes and conventional cigarettes by the same person, is common among youth and young adults (ages 18-25). In 2015, more than a quarter of students in grades 6 through 12 and more than a third of young adults had ever tried e-cigarettes.

HVCASA has collected anecdotal data from area youth and school personnel and can report that vaping is commonplace in all our regional high schools.

“E-cigarettes are now the most commonly used tobacco product among youth, and use continues to climb,” said CDC Director Tom Frieden, M.D., M.P.H. “No form of youth tobacco use is safe. Nicotine is an addictive drug and use during adolescence may cause lasting harm to brain development (cdc.gov 2016).”

Schools take action-

- Disciplinary standards are being created for students who are caught vaping on school grounds. For instance, students at Shepaug High School are subject to a fine of \$150 if caught with an e-cigarette
- E-cigarette devices can be used to inhale other substances, as well. Some School Resource Officers are testing devices they confiscate for traces of THC.
- This past year, some schools have resorted to locking and increasing staff surveillance of bathrooms – an unfortunate waste of staff time and change in school culture .
- Teachers are also tasked with monitoring e-cigarette use in the classroom where the vapor can go undetected and students slip the devices into shirt sleeves.



We reported on these 2016 FDA Guidelines below:

*Not allowing products to be sold to persons under the age of 18 (in person and online)

*Requiring age verification by photo ID

*Not allowing the selling of covered tobacco products in vending machines

*Not allowing the distribution of free samples

*Other requirements are being put into place regarding ingredients, and review of products and health warnings; a first step towards enabling the FDA to regulate these products

2017 Update: The FDA recently suspended enforcement that would impose strict oversight over e-cigarettes for the first time. E-cigarette makers now have another 4 years to comply with new guidelines pertaining to ingredients and marketing. This is not good news for our children.

Talk to your kids! Here's why:

Nicotine is an addictive drug

- The brain is still developing until about age 25. Because of that, young people are more vulnerable to addiction. Many e-cigs contain nicotine, and using nicotine can change your brain to make you crave more nicotine
- It can affect memory, concentration, and mood

E-Cigarettes contain chemicals that are harmful

We are now learning about DNA damage connected to E-cigarette use

- UConn chemists conducted a study in June 2017 where they “found that e-cigarettes loaded with a nicotine based liquid are potentially as harmful as unfiltered cigarettes when it comes to causing DNA damage”.
- “Cellular mutations caused by DNA damage can lead to cancer”.

Uconn.edu/ecigs



For more information:

<https://e-cigarettes.surgeongeneral.gov/default.htm>

https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/sgr/e-cigarettes/pdfs/2016_sgr_entire_report_508.pdf

<https://www.cdc.gov/features/ecigarettes-young-people/index.html>