
PARENT INFORMATION: E-CIGARETTES

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) describes an e-cigarette as a battery-operated device that turns nicotine, flavorings, and other chemicals into a vapor that can be inhaled. These devices currently are not FDA regulated, and their safety has not been well studied. Because of a lack of regulation and evidence-based research, the dosing of nicotine, if used, flavorings or other chemicals and propellants vary greatly. Although smoke is not produced with e-cigarettes, exhaled vapors containing propellants and flavorings may have a negative effect, not only on the person doing the inhaling, but also on others, like secondhand smoke; however, further study is needed. For individuals who wish to use nicotine devices to stop or cut down on smoking, there are FDA regulated nicotine devices available by prescription under the care of a medical professional. Over-the-counter (OTC) e-cigarettes are another matter.

Youth have been targeted in advertising OTC e-cigarettes with the promotion of flavorings that were banned in cigarettes that had the sole purpose of attracting young users. Attractive stars are advertising the use of e-cigarettes in television commercials when all other nicotine containing substances are banned from TV ads. OTC e-cigarette devices are made to look like cigarettes, and the action of inhaling essentially teaches a child how to smoke. As a result, the American Academy of Pediatrics is encouraging better regulation and more study about the safety of these devices and the chemicals used inside them.

All tobacco products are banned from school property or school activities. Furthermore, because these devices mimic the act of smoking, even if nicotine is not present, allowing students to carry and use these devices creates an atmosphere within our school community that contradicts essential healthy life skills and choices our district is trying to teach our children and adolescents. The district discourages the use of tobacco, tobacco products, alcohol, and all recreational drugs by our students. These devices promote a drug-seeking life style that the district cannot support.

Therefore, please ask your children whether they are using these devices, and if so, teach your children the risks and benefits of these devices. Please tell your children who use these devices not to use these devices in school, on school property, or during school activities on or off campus. All devices found on students will be confiscated and may be retrieved only by parents in the main office.

To give you up-to-date accurate information that you can share with your children, a fact sheet on e-cigarettes is available from the American Academy of Pediatrics at http://www2.aap.org/richmondcenter/pdfs/ECigarette_handout.pdf

Additional information about emerging and alternative tobacco products is also available through the American Academy of Pediatrics at <http://www2.aap.org/richmondcenter/EmergingAltProducts.html>

A radio segment by Dr. Susanne Tanski, pediatrician from Dartmouth College, can be accessed at the AAP website, Healthy Children, at <http://radiomd.com/show/healthy-children/item/13836-e-cigarettes-are-they-dangerous-for-your-children>

Research has shown that when children and adolescents hear the credible, valid concerns expressed about substance use from a trusted and valued adult in their lives, they are less likely to try them. You can make a positive difference in the life of your child by staying informed and talking to your children regularly, even if they do not seem to be listening, because what you say and especially what you do matters to your children and can make a substantial difference in their lives.

Sincerely,

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