

# 8th Grade Health: Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drugs

## Smoking and Vaping

### Vaping: What You Need to Know

#### What Is Vaping?

Vaping is the inhaling of a vapor created by an electronic cigarette (**e-cigarette**) or other vaping device. E-cigarettes are battery-powered smoking devices. They have cartridges filled with a liquid that usually contains nicotine, flavorings, and chemicals. The liquid is heated into a vapor, which the person inhales. That's why using e-cigarettes is called "vaping."

#### What Are the Health Effects of Vaping?

Vaping hasn't been around long enough for us to know how it affects the body over time. But health experts are reporting serious lung damage in people who vape, including some deaths.

Vaping puts nicotine into the body. Nicotine is highly addictive and can:

- slow brain development in teens and affect memory, concentration, learning, self-control, attention, and mood
- increase the risk of other types of addiction later in life

E-cigarettes also:

- irritate the lungs
- may cause serious lung damage and even death
- can lead to smoking cigarettes and other forms of tobacco use

Some people use e-cigarettes to vape marijuana, THC oil, and other dangerous chemicals. Besides irritating the lungs, these drugs also affect how someone thinks, acts, and feels.

#### How Do E-Cigarettes Work?

There are different kinds of e-cigarettes. But many people use the Juul. This e-cigarette looks like a flash drive and can be charged in a laptop's USB port. It makes less smoke than other e-cigarettes, so some teens use them to vape at home and in school. The Juul pod's nicotine levels are the same as in a full pack of cigarettes.

#### Do I Have to Vape Every Day to Get Addicted?

Even if you don't vape every day, you can still get addicted. How quickly someone gets addicted varies. Some people get addicted even if they don't vape every day.

#### What About E-cigarettes That Don't Have Nicotine?

Most e-cigarettes do have nicotine. Even those that don't do have chemicals in them. These chemicals can irritate and damage the lungs. The long-term effects of e-cigarettes that don't have nicotine are not known.

#### Why Should I Quit?

Wanting to be the best, healthiest version of yourself is an important reason to quit vaping. Others include:

**Unknown health effects:** The long-term health consequences of vaping are not known. Recent studies report serious lung damage in people who vape, and even some deaths.

**Addiction:** Addiction in the growing brain may set up pathways for later addiction to other substances.

**Brain risks:** Nicotine affects your brain development. This can make it harder to learn and concentrate. Some of the brain changes are permanent and can affect your mood and ability to control your impulses as an adult.

**Use of other tobacco products:** Studies show that vaping makes it more likely that someone will try other tobacco products, like regular cigarettes, cigars, hookahs, and smokeless tobacco.

**Toxins (poisons):** The vapor made from e-cigarettes is **not** made of water. The vapor contains harmful chemicals and very fine particles that are inhaled into the lungs and exhaled into the environment.

**Sports:** You want to do your best in sports, and vaping may lead to lung inflammation (irritation).

**Money:** Vaping is expensive! The cost of the cartridges over time starts to add up. Instead, you could spend that money on other things you need or enjoy.

**To go against tobacco company advertising:** Many e-cigarettes are made by the same companies that produce regular cigarettes. Their marketing targets young people by making fun flavors for e-cigarettes and showing young, healthy people vaping. They're trying to make you into their new, lifetime customer.

### How Can I Quit?

- Decide why you want to quit and write it down or put it in your phone. Look at the reason(s) when you feel the urge to vape.
- Pick a day to stop vaping. Put it on the calendar and tell supportive friends and family that you're quitting on that day.
- Get rid of all vaping supplies.
- Download tools (such as apps and texting programs) to your phone that can help with cravings and give encouragement while you try to stop vaping.
- Understand withdrawal. Nicotine addiction leads to very strong cravings for nicotine. It can also lead to:
  - headaches
  - feeling tired, cranky, angry, or depressed
  - trouble concentrating
  - trouble sleeping
  - hunger
  - restlessness

The signs of withdrawal are strongest in the first few days after stopping. They get better over the following days and weeks.

Get ready for feelings, people, and places that make you want to vape. These are called **triggers**. If possible, avoid places and people that trigger the urge to vape. If you feel the urge to vape, try these things instead:

- Chew sugar-free gum or drink water.
- Text, call, or hang out with a friend who will support you.
- Listen to your favorite playlist.
- Go for a walk or jog.
- Try yoga or meditation.
- Take 10 deep breaths.
- Keep your hands busy with a hobby, like drawing or making jewelry.
- Go somewhere where smoking/vaping isn't allowed.

### What Else Can I Do?

Now that you understand the risks of vaping, take control of your health. If you're having a hard time quitting, talk to your health care provider about local programs and websites that can help you quit vaping.

If you vape, know that it may cause serious lung damage, and even death. Call your doctor right away if you vape and have:

- coughing, shortness of breath, or chest pain
- nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea
- tiredness, fever, or weight loss

## Smoking: What You Need To Know

Most of us know that smoking:

- causes cancer, lung disease, and heart disease
- can shorten your life by 10 years or more
- can cost a smoker thousands of dollars a year

So why are people still lighting up? The answer, in a word, is addiction.

### Once You Start, It's Hard to Stop

Smoking is a hard habit to break because tobacco contains the very addictive chemical nicotine. As with heroin or other addictive drugs, the body and mind quickly get used to the nicotine in cigarettes. Soon, a person needs to have it just to feel normal.

People start smoking for different reasons. Some think it looks cool. Others start because their family members or friends smoke. Almost all adult tobacco users started before they were 18 years old. Most never expected to become addicted. That's why it's so much easier to not start smoking at all.

### **What About E-Cigarettes and Hookahs?**

It's not only cigarettes that people get hooked on.

Also beware of vaping. Battery-operated e-cigarettes use cartridges filled with nicotine, flavorings, and other harmful chemicals and turn them into a vapor that's inhaled by the user.

Some people think that e-cigarettes are safer than regular cigarettes because they don't contain tobacco. But the other ingredients in them are dangerous too. In fact, there are reports of serious lung damage and even death among people who use e-cigarettes. So health experts strongly warn against using them.

Hookahs are water pipes used to smoke tobacco through a hose with a mouthpiece. Some people think they're safer than cigarettes because the smoke cools when it passes through the water. But look at the black gunk that builds up in a hookah hose. Some of that gets into users' mouths and lungs. And since they don't have filters and people often use them for long periods, their health risks might be even greater. Hookahs are usually shared, so there's the added risk from germs being passed around along with the pipe.

### **How Can Smoking Affect Health?**

Many of the chemicals in cigarettes, like nicotine and cyanide, are poisons that can kill in high doses. The body is smart. It goes on the defense when it's being poisoned. First-time smokers often feel pain or burning in their throat and lungs, and some even throw up the first few times they try tobacco.

Over time, smoking leads to health problems such as:

- heart disease
- stroke
- lung damage
- many types of cancer — including lung, throat, stomach, and bladder cancer

Other problems include:

- gum disease
- yellow teeth
- eye disease
- an increased risk for infections (like pneumonia)
- a greater risk of diabetes
- weaker bones that are easier to break
- skin problems like psoriasis (a type of rash)
- wrinkled skin
- ulcers

Smoking can affect sexual health in both men and women. Girls who smoke and are on hormone-based birth control methods like the Pill, the patch, or the ring have a higher risk of serious health problems, like heart attacks. And if a woman wants to get pregnant, smoking can make that harder.

Besides these long-term problems, the chemicals in cigarettes and other products also can affect the body quickly.

Teen smokers can have many of these problems:

- **Bad breath.** Cigarettes leave smokers with a condition called halitosis, or lasting bad breath.
- **Bad-smelling clothes and hair.** The smell of stale smoke tends to last — not just on people's clothing, but on their hair, furniture, and cars. It's hard to get the smell of smoke out.
- **Trouble keeping up in sports.** Smokers usually can't compete well with nonsmokers. Physical effects of smoking, like a fast heartbeat, decreased circulation, and shortness of breath, harm sports performance.
- **Greater risk of injury and slower healing time.** Smoking hurts the body's ability to make collagen. So common sports injuries, such as damage to tendons and ligaments, will heal more slowly in smokers than nonsmokers.
- **Increased risk of illness.** Studies show that smokers get sick more with colds, flu, bronchitis, and pneumonia than nonsmokers. And people with some health conditions, like asthma, get sicker if they smoke (and often if they're just around people who smoke). Teens who smoke as a way to manage their weight

often light up instead of eating. So their bodies can lack the nutrients needed to grow, develop, and fight off illness well.

### **Kicking Butts and Staying Smoke-Free**

All forms of tobacco — cigarettes, pipes, cigars, hookahs, and smokeless tobacco — are health hazards. It doesn't help to substitute products that are advertised as better for you, such as e-cigarettes or filtered or low-tar cigarettes.

The only thing that really helps is staying away from all these products. This isn't always easy, especially if everyone around you is smoking or vaping. It may help to have your reasons for saying no ready for times you may feel the pressure. Try "I just don't like it" or "I want to stay in shape for soccer" (or football, basketball, or other sport).

If you do smoke or vape and want to quit, you have lots of information and support available. Different approaches to quitting work for different people. For some, quitting cold turkey is best. Others find that a slower approach is the way to go. Some people find that it helps to go to a support group especially for teens.

You also can find information and support online at:

- Smoking Quitline
- Quit Tobacco
- Smokefree.gov

When quitting, know that the first few days are the hardest. So don't give up. Some people find they have a few relapses before they manage to quit for good.

Staying smoke-free will give you more energy, better looks, more money in your pocket, and in the long run, more life to live!

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Instructions: The average smoker spends close to \$2190 per year on cigarettes. Please draw a picture that shows what you would use that money for instead of buying tobacco products. (ex. Car, travel, college savings, new camera, gaming console...)

If I was given, \$2190 this year, I would...

instead of using tobacco products!