



Australian Government

**GIVE UP  
FOR GOOD**

# What you need to know about *vaping*



Vaping can damage your health now and into the future. Today's 14 to 24-year-olds are the first generation to be exposed to nicotine mostly through vaping instead of cigarettes.

## So, what is vaping?

Don't be confused by the lingo – vapes, mods, tank systems, e-cigs and vape pens are all forms of e-cigarettes.

Vaping is the use of an e-cigarette, or 'vape', a battery-operated device that can look like a cigarette, cigar, pipe or common items like highlighters or a USB. The aerosol (mist or vapour) from vapes is made by heating up liquid chemicals that are breathed in.

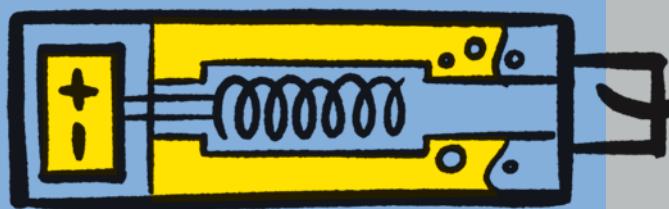
Vapes deliver nicotine to the person who is using them and mimics the actions and sensations of smoking. This is commonly referred to as 'vaping'.

## Is the vapour created by e-cigarettes safe?

No. Calling the emissions from e-cigarettes 'vapour' gives the impression that it is just steam. This is not the case. The 'cloud' or aerosol that is exhaled while vaping is a mix of gases and tiny droplets of chemicals. When you vape, this fine spray of chemicals enters your body via your lungs, where the small particles can get lodged.

Illegal vapes contain nicotine – even when the packaging says they don't. They contain dangerous substances and over 200 unique chemicals have been found in illegal vapes, including harmful substances like formaldehyde, acetone and heavy metals.

Tank with heated e-liquid



Battery

Coil wire

Aerosol (mist or vapour) breathed in



## Vaping and physical and mental health

Short and long-term vaping can impact your health and well-being.

You may experience:

lung inflammation and throat irritation

persistent coughing

breathing problems such as shortness of breath and wheezing, which can also decrease physical performance

temporary loss or change in taste

nausea

swelling, bleeding and redness of the gums

trouble with your asthma

nicotine poisoning

nicotine dependence.

Vaping and nicotine can also affect your wellbeing and mental health, including effects on:

your **mood**, particularly when nicotine levels in your body drop, and may make mental health issues like anxiety and depression worse

your **brain**, which is still developing until your mid to late 20s. It can harm parts of the brain that control attention, learning and memory.

## Vaping and nicotine dependence

Most vapes contain nicotine, which is addictive. Nicotine activates receptors in the brain. When these receptors are activated, they release a brain chemical called dopamine, which makes you feel good.

As the nicotine levels in the body fade, the brain craves more dopamine.

Once people are dependent on nicotine, they will experience withdrawal symptoms without it, which can make quitting hard. When someone stops vaping, the nicotine level in the blood drops. Some signs of nicotine withdrawal include:

nicotine cravings

feeling irritable or grumpy

finding it hard to concentrate

feeling nervous or restless

changes in appetite

feeling like they have the flu

feeling dizzy or having head spins

depression

finding it hard to sleep (insomnia).

## Other nicotine products

Other nicotine products, like pouches, often contain high levels of nicotine (even if the packaging doesn't say so), which is highly addictive. They may also contain other unknown and dangerous ingredients which can be harmful to their health.

Switching from vaping to other nicotine products (including smoking) isn't good for your health or a risk-free alternative to vaping.



## Vaping laws

The Australian Government's laws around vapes and vaping aim to protect young people from the harms of vaping and nicotine dependence.

People 18 years and older can buy therapeutic vapes from participating pharmacies, subject to certain conditions being met and where state and territory laws allow.

People under 18 also need a prescription to access therapeutic vapes to ensure they get appropriate medical advice and supervision.

These laws are focused on stopping the commercial and criminal supply of vapes. Individuals – including those under 18 – who possess a vape for personal use won't be targeted under the laws.

More information is available at the Therapeutic Goods Administration website: [tga.gov.au](https://www.tga.gov.au)

## Reasons to quit

Quitting vaping is a major step towards improving your physical and mental wellbeing.

If you're trying to quit, it's normal to have cravings and to find it difficult to give up vapes. Many people have found it takes a few attempts before they become completely vape-free. Finding the right support and knowing what to expect when quitting can help.

## How to quit

There are lots of options to support you to quit vaping.

**Quitline (13 7848)** is a confidential phone service. You can talk to a professional counsellor about ways to quit. In some states and territories you can chat to a counsellor online.

A **doctor or a trusted health professional** can give you helpful advice on how to quit.

Share your quitting journey with friends who support your decision.

Remember, lots of young people have found it takes a few tries before they are completely vape-free. It's important to keep trying, even if it takes a few goes before you quit completely.

For more information and help to quit visit [health.gov.au/vaping](https://www.health.gov.au/vaping), [quit.org.au](https://www.quit.org.au), download the **My QuitBuddy** app, **Pave** app or talk to a health professional.

The **My QuitBuddy** app is your free, pocket-sized support crew to help you quit vaping for good. Whether you're just getting started or staying on track, it's like having your best friend in your pocket, offering tips, motivation, and support whenever you need it. Age restrictions may apply – check your app store for details.



# It can be easier to quit with a friend.

Find support



[health.gov.au/vaping](https://www.health.gov.au/vaping)