



Australian Government

**GIVE UP  
FOR GOOD**



# ***Frequently asked questions*** about vaping for parents and carers

LET'S JOIN THE THOUSANDS

**QUITTING VAPES**

## What is vaping?

Vaping is the use of an e-cigarette, or 'vape', a battery operated device that comes in all shapes and sizes and can look like a cigarette, cigar, pipe, or common items like highlighters or a USB.

Vapes are often small enough to fit into a pocket or pencil case. 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'.

Vapes, mods, tank systems, e-cigs and vape pens are all forms of e-cigarettes.

## What's in illegal vapes?

The e-liquid in illegal vapes, also known as 'vape juice', contains dangerous substances and over 200 unique chemicals have been found like formaldehyde and heavy metals.

Most vapes in Australia contain nicotine – even when the packaging says they don't.

Vapes can have dangerous substances in the liquids and vapour. Some chemicals found in vapes are known to cause cancer, such as:

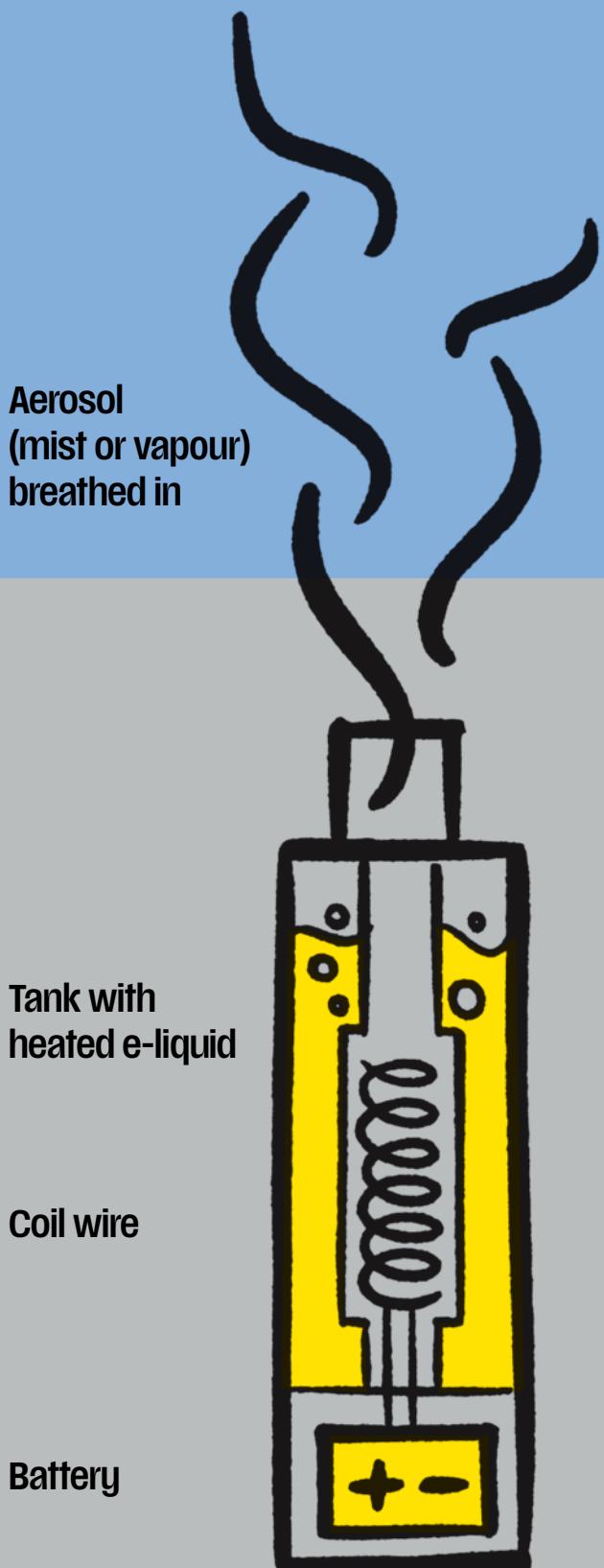
formaldehyde (used in industrial glues and for preserving corpses in hospitals and funeral homes)

acetone (found in some nail polish removers)

acetaldehyde (used in chemicals, perfumes, and plastics)

acrolein (often found in weedkiller)

heavy metals like nickel, tin, and lead.



## How does vaping impact physical health?

Vaping can damage your health now and in the future. Even occasional vaping can be harmful to your health.

The physical impacts of vaping can include:

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 in social situations is also damaging to your health, as this can quickly lead to nicotine dependence and the desire to vape more often.

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

No. Calling the emissions from e-cigarettes 'vapour' gives the impression 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 people vape, this fine spray of chemicals enters the body through the lungs and can cause many health impacts.

## What do illegal vapes smell like?

Illegal vapes often have flavours added to the e-liquid and this can make them smell and taste sweet. Flavours designed to appeal to young people can include fairy floss, fruit punch and cola (but the list of flavours is extensive).



## Why is my child vaping?

Illegal vapes often have sweet flavours that may appeal to young people. They also come in youth-friendly packaging that might include bright colours, cartoons or be made to look like lollies.

Vape advertising may also give young people the impression that vapes are fun, cool and a lower risk option to smoking.

Research has shown vape retailers are intentionally promoting vaping to young people on social media. Read more [here](https://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/news-publications/research-publications/how-vaping-advertisers-target-young-people) (<https://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/news-publications/research-publications/how-vaping-advertisers-target-young-people>) on how social media is being used to promote vaping to young people.

Some of the reasons your child may try vaping include:

they are curious

a desire to fit in with their friends

the appeal of different flavours

to copy actors, models or influencers in movies, video games or social media

a desire to appear grown up and assert independence

copying adults or older siblings who smoke or vape

a misguided view that vaping is safer than smoking.

## Can vaping lead to nicotine dependence?

Yes. Most illegal vapes contain nicotine, which is highly addictive because it triggers the release of dopamine in the brain, which makes you feel good.

As the nicotine levels in the body fade, the brain craves more dopamine. The longer someone has been vaping nicotine, the more dopamine they need to feel good.

When someone stops vaping, the nicotine level in their blood drops. Their dependency on nicotine may make it hard to concentrate, they may experience changes in mood and might even feel irritable, frustrated, angry or anxious.

This is nicotine addiction.

## Can vaping impact mental health?

Yes. Vaping and nicotine can affect your child's wellbeing and mental health, including effects on:

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

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

## Are people who use vapes more likely to take up tobacco cigarettes?

Yes. Research shows young people who vape, but have never smoked are more likely to take up tobacco smoking compared to young people who have never vaped.

## Are other nicotine products harmful?

Using other nicotine products, like pouches, is not good for your health or a risk-free alternative to vaping.



These products are not considered Nicotine Replacement Therapies and 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.

## What do the vaping laws mean?

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)

## What can I do as a parent or carer?

Talking to young people about the health risks of vaping is important.

The Escape the vape: a conversation guide for parents and carers, available at [health.gov.au/quit-smoking](https://www.health.gov.au/your-health/quit-smoking/quit-smoking/quitline/quitline-escape-the-vape) can help you start the conversation with your child or a young person you care about.

Research shows that many young people are becoming increasingly concerned about the health effects of vaping, and a significant number of those who vape want to quit.

Ensure you consider how your own behaviour may impact your child and how the family environment can influence a young person's behaviour. Research has shown children whose parents vape are 64 per cent more likely to vape. If a parent currently smokes, their child's likelihood of smoking increases by 193 per cent.

When talking to your child about vaping, try to:

listen and talk without judgement

be curious and interested in your child's thoughts and feelings

provide a safe environment for two-way conversation – the safer your child feels, the better your conversation will go and the more helpful you can be.



Quitline can guide you through these conversations as well. Quitline counsellors can talk with you about your concerns and provide advice on what you can do as a parent or carer. They can also guide you on how you can start a conversation with your child or a young person you care about.

### How to contact Quitline:

Call [13 7848](tel:137848) (Monday to Friday, 8am – 8pm)

Start a chat via [Facebook Messenger](#) or [Whatsapp](#) (VIC, SA, NT and WA)

Request a call back or live chat at [quit.org.au](https://quit.org.au)

## What's the best way to quit?

There are lots of options to support young people to quit vaping.

[Quitline](#) (13 7848) is a confidential phone service. They can talk to a professional counsellor about ways to quit. In some states and territories, they can chat to a counsellor online.

A [doctor or a trusted health professional](#) can give them helpful advice on how to quit.

Encourage them to share their quitting journey with friends who support their decision.

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

For more information and help to quit visit [health.gov.au/vaping](http://health.gov.au/vaping), [quit.org.au](http://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.



**My QuitBuddy**

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.

The Pave app is a free app for young people to help them on their quit journey.



# It can be easier to quit with a friend.

Find support



[health.gov.au/vaping](http://health.gov.au/vaping)