



# Vaping and quitting FAQs



Vapes, also known as e-cigarettes, are devices that make vapour for inhalation, simulating cigarette smoking. They are not safe, and use can lead to serious health outcomes.

Vapes can contain high levels of nicotine which makes them highly addictive and can make quitting hard. But it's never too late to quit and there are lots of free support services and effective tools to help you.

Quitting at any age will improve your health and quality of life, and protect the health of people around you.

This document answers a range of common questions about vaping, and how and why you should quit.

Arming yourself with the facts is the first step to giving up vaping for good.

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## What is a vape?

Vapes, or e-cigarettes, are battery-operated devices that deliver an aerosol by heating a liquid that people breathe in. People commonly refer to this aerosol as 'vapour,' and to using e-cigarettes as 'vaping.'

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## What's inside a vape?

Despite what the packaging might claim, most vapes in Australia contain nicotine.

Nicotine is a highly addictive and toxic drug that can impact attention, learning and memory, and cause changes in mood.

The labels on vapes are often incomplete or incorrect. Vapes can actually contain high levels of nicotine. More than 200 different chemicals have been found in vapes, which can be harmful to your lungs and your health.

The dangerous substances in vapes can also include a number of known cancer-causing agents, such as:

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

**acetone** (generally found in nail polish remover)

**acetaldehyde** (used in chemicals, perfumes, and plastics)

**acrolein** (commonly found in weedkiller)

**heavy metals** like nickel, tin, and lead.



They can also contain:

**propylene glycol** – a solvent used in fog/smoke machines

**polyester** (plastic) compounds

**anti-freeze** – used in the coolant of a car

**vegetable glycerin** – a liquid from vegetable fat.

## What are the physical health impacts of vaping?

The known health risks associated with vaping include:

irritation of the mouth, gums and airways

persistent coughing

feeling nauseous and dizzy

shortness of breath and wheezing

nicotine poisoning which can cause seizures from inhaling too much nicotine or ingestion of e-liquid

burns or injury caused by e-cigarette overheating or exploding

nicotine dependence

respiratory problems and lung damage

increased blood pressure and heart rate during use and for a short time after

poor sleep quality, resulting in feeling tired

temporary loss of taste or change in taste.

## Can vaping negatively affect mental health?

Yes. Vaping can make mental health issues like depression and anxiety worse, but quitting can improve your mental health.

If vaping is impacting your mental wellbeing, help is available. You can talk to your GP or a health professional or try one of these organisations:

13YARN [www.13yarn.org.au](http://www.13yarn.org.au) or phone 13 9276

Beyond Blue [www.beyondblue.org.au](http://www.beyondblue.org.au) or phone 1300 22 4636

Medicare Mental Health [www.medicarementalhealth.gov.au](http://www.medicarementalhealth.gov.au) or phone 1800 595 212

headspace [www.headspace.org.au](http://www.headspace.org.au) or phone 1800 650 890

## Is my health still impacted if I only vape sometimes?

Yes. Social vaping or doing it occasionally can quickly lead to dependence on nicotine and a desire to vape more often. The only way to reduce harm is to not vape.

## Can vaping lead to smoking?

Yes. Research shows a strong association between vaping and future smoking behaviours.

Non-smokers who vape are three times more likely to take up smoking cigarettes.

Smoking is the leading cause of preventable death in Australia. If you smoke, you:

reduce your life expectancy and your quality of life

increase your risk of many serious conditions and diseases.



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## What about using vapes to quit smoking?

If you have been using vapes to help you quit smoking, your doctor, pharmacist or other trusted health professional can provide advice, including help to manage nicotine dependence while you quit.

There is a range of safe and effective products available to help you quit smoking. They include nicotine replacement therapy (or NRT for short – which includes nicotine patches, gum and mouth sprays) and other prescribed stop smoking medications. These products have passed strict safety standards and are proven to help people reduce cravings and ease feelings of withdrawal. Many NRT products are available at your local supermarket or over the counter at the chemist, some are even subsidised through the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme, making them cheaper.

Therapeutic vapes, which are only available at participating pharmacies and under the guidance of a health professional, should only be considered if you have been unable to quit smoking using other treatment options – like NRT.

Therapeutic vapes are different to those sold illegally by other retailers or online as they are required to meet product standards to reduce certain risks associated with the use of vapes. However, there is no guarantee about their safety, quality or performance.

Using vapes without clinical guidance is not recommended as they can be harmful to your health and may not be an effective way for you to quit smoking.

If you are using vapes to quit smoking, you should have a follow-on plan to eventually quit smoking and vaping entirely – and become nicotine-free.

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## Are other nicotine products, like pouches, a good alternative to vaping?

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

These products, such as nicotine pouches, are not considered NRT 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 your health.

Early research shows that oral nicotine products are linked to mouth lesions, upset stomach, sore mouth and throat, nausea and nicotine addiction. The long-term health impacts are unknown.

If you want to become nicotine-free – there are many safe and effective products, as well as services, available to support you to quit. Your doctor, Quitline counsellor or trusted health professional can help you find the best option that works for you.





## How can I quit vaping?

A combination of methods often works best to manage nicotine cravings, and there is a range of resources and services to support people who want to live vape-free:

Talk with your doctor, pharmacist or other health professional about the different options available to you, including medications that can reduce cravings and feelings of withdrawal.

Call Quitline on **13 7848** for confidential advice and support from professionally trained counsellors. You can even request a free callback for a time that works for you.

Visit [Quit.org.au](https://www.quit.org.au) for tips and strategies to help you quit and information on how you may feel during the quitting process.

Download the free and newly updated [My QuitBuddy](#) app to access a range of tools, quit tips and reminders to overcome cravings and stay on track.

## Aren't Quit support services only for smokers?

No. Quit support services are proven to help people quit nicotine – for both vaping and smoking – no matter how long you've been doing it.

## What if I tried to quit in the past, but it didn't work?

Quitting can be hard and it might take several attempts to quit. It's a good idea to get support if you decide you want to quit. Talking to a health professional can help you make a plan that works for you. There are many different methods to quitting – you can find out more at [Quit.org.au](https://www.quit.org.au).

It's always worth trying again using a different approach. Many people have quit and you can too. Every quit attempt will bring you one step closer to giving up for good.

For help to give up vaping for good, talk to a health professional, visit [Quit.org.au](https://www.quit.org.au), call Quitline on **13 7848**, or download the [My QuitBuddy](#) app.



For more information visit

[health.gov.au/GiveUpForGood](https://health.gov.au/GiveUpForGood)

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