

# VAPING AND E-CIGARETTES: THE FACTS FOR PARENTS AND CARERS



This leaflet is to support parents and carers to have conversations with their children about vaping.

## WHAT IS VAPING?

Vaping is the use of an electronic device to inhale vapour derived from a heated liquid. The main ingredients are vegetable glycerine and propylene glycol, but most e-liquids also contain nicotine, which must be no more than 2% or 20mg per ml, as well as small amounts of flavourings and sweeteners.

## SMOKING VS VAPING

Smoking is much more harmful than vaping. Tobacco smoke contains carbon monoxide and tar, a sticky soup of around 250 toxic chemicals, 69 of which are known to be carcinogenic, causing disease, disability, and early death.

## HOWEVER, VAPES ARE NOT HARMLESS

Short-term effects can include:

- coughing
- headaches
- dizziness, and
- sore throats.

Long-term effects are, as yet, unknown.

## WHAT ARE THE CONCERNS WITH VAPING AND CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE?

Most children and young people don't vape or smoke. However, in 2022 the number of 11-17-year-olds in Great Britain currently using vapes rose to 7% compared to 4% in 2020. Whilst this increase is concerning, it is important to note that most vaping is experimental, with regular vaping mainly confined to children who currently smoke or have done in the past.

The increase in youth vaping has coincided with the arrival on the UK market of a new category of cheap and attractive disposable vapes that have proven particularly popular with children and young people and have been promoted extensively on social media. We are working hard nationally and locally to address these issues.

## HOW DO VAPES HELP SMOKERS QUIT?

Like nicotine patches and gum, vapes containing nicotine are a useful aid to quitting as they deal with the cravings smokers get when they try to stop. Nicotine vapes are proven effective and have become the most popular quitting aid for smokers in recent years. However, vapes are not recommended for non-smokers, particularly children.

## THE LAW AND VAPING

Vapes and vaping products containing nicotine, like tobacco, are age restricted. It's illegal to sell them to under 18s, and for adults to buy them on their behalf.

If you know of anyone who does sell vapes or tobacco illegally, you can report them to trading standards through the Citizens Advice online portal: [citizensadvice.org.uk/consumer](https://citizensadvice.org.uk/consumer)

Advertising of all tobacco products is illegal, but if you see advertising for vapes that you feel is trying to encourage children and young people to try vaping, you can report it to the Advertising Standards Authority: [asa.org.uk](https://asa.org.uk)

For more information about vapes and stopping smoking, visit the Your Health Barnet website: [yourhealthbarnet.org/youth-vaping](https://yourhealthbarnet.org/youth-vaping)

Children and Young people can find out more information on vaping on the FRANK website: [talktofrank.com/drug/vapes](https://talktofrank.com/drug/vapes)

Or read the ASH Briefing: [ash.org.uk/uploads/ASH-briefing-for-local-authorities-on-youth-vaping.pdf](https://ash.org.uk/uploads/ASH-briefing-for-local-authorities-on-youth-vaping.pdf)



**OUR ADVICE TO CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IS:  
DON'T SMOKE? DON'T START TO VAPE.**

## HAVING CONVERSATIONS WITH YOUR CHILD ABOUT VAPING?

### **Find the right moment**

when you see someone vaping, walk past a vape shop or see advertisements.

**Ask questions** what do they think about vaping? Do they know people who vape? Why do they think people vape?

**Listen to them** learn from them, but also use your knowledge to help them understand the facts and that vapes are not harmless.

**Talk about your expectations** explain your concerns and tell them why you don't want them to vape or smoke and to make clear that although neither are recommended, smoking is the far greater risk.

**Let them know that you care about them** explain that those who knowingly sell vapes to under 18s don't care who they sell to and they are just interested in making money

**Talk about the different reasons why children may vape** give examples such as wanting to fit in, curiosity, stress. Talk through effective ways to respond if they ever feel pressured to try it and practise responding together.

**If your child is vaping** try to understand why they are vaping by asking questions like "What do you enjoy about vaping?" Or "How does vaping make you feel?". Understanding this might help you to understand their needs and discuss other ways to meet those needs.

