

## **E-Cigarettes and Vaping: What You Should Know**

*E-cigarettes have not been studied long enough to know if they are safe or if they can help you quit smoking.*

### **What are e-cigarettes? How do they work?**

E-cigarettes (electronic cigarettes) are hand-held devices with a battery-operated heater and liquid inside. This liquid is also known as “vape juice.” When used, the battery heats the liquid and turns it into an aerosol. An aerosol is a gas in which tiny particles and droplets are suspended. The user inhales the aerosol.



E-cigarettes come in many different forms. Some look like plastic cigarettes, some look like pens, and some are larger and box-shaped. You can buy them online, in convenience stores, or in vape shops. Smoking e-cigarettes is also called "vaping."

### **What is inside the liquid or “vape juice.”**

Like “regular cigarettes,” the liquid in e-cigarettes usually contains nicotine, the chemical that makes tobacco products addictive. The e-cigarette liquid contains other chemicals, including flavorings. E-cigarette liquids do not contain water.

### **How does e-cigarette aerosol differ from tobacco smoke?**

Even though e-cigarette aerosol looks like cigarette smoke, it is different. Cigarette smoke is created by burning tobacco. E-cigarettes do not contain tobacco. To create the aerosol, the liquid inside the e-cigarette is heated, but not burned.

### **Are e-cigarettes safe?**

We don't yet know how e-cigarettes affect health. Since e-cigarettes are new products, little is known about their long-term effects. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is just starting to regulate e-cigarettes and do safety checks about what goes into them. E-cigarettes generally contain nicotine, which is addictive but does not cause cancer. E-cigarettes also contain other chemicals. Whether these are harmful is not known. More studies on the health risks are needed.

In the meantime, most health experts think that switching completely from cigarettes to e-cigarettes will be less harmful than continuing to smoke tobacco cigarettes. However, someone who smokes cigarettes and uses e-cigarettes (a practice called "dual use") probably benefits much less than someone who switches completely to e-cigarettes.

### **Do e-cigarettes help people quit smoking?**

We don't know yet. Many people do use e-cigarettes to cut down on smoking, but too few studies have been done to know whether they work for this purpose. So far, it looks like smokers who have quit with e-cigarettes have used them daily and regularly to replace cigarettes.

### **What about second-hand effects?**

E-cigarette aerosol contains much less nicotine and other chemicals than second-hand cigarette smoke does, but it does produce some. We don't yet know how risky this is for other people. However, all U.S. airlines ban e-

cigarettes to protect passengers from possible second-hand effects. More than 100 cities and several states outlaw use of e-cigarettes indoors.

### Children and accidental poisoning

In Massachusetts, child-resistant packaging is required for the cartridges used with e-cigarettes because the liquid contained in them could poison a child who accidentally consumes it.

### What medications can I use to help me quit using e-cigarettes?

Talk to your clinician about these options:

- Nicotine replacement
  - Over-the-counter options: patch, gum, lozenge, mini-lozenge
  - Prescription options: inhaler, nasal spray
- Non-nicotine medications (prescription required)
  - Varenicline (Chantix)
  - Bupropion (Wellbutrin, Zyban)

You may get the best results from using a combination of medications:

- Use two forms of nicotine replacement; for example, a long-acting patch to get a stable dose of nicotine and a quick-acting gum or inhaler to relieve cravings.
- Use non-nicotine medications with nicotine replacements.

**Source: MGH Tobacco Research and Treatment Center, 2017**

#### FREE ways to get help with quitting tobacco

- If you have **questions**, want **free information**, or **free in-person, one-one-one coaching** - call MGH Community Health Associate's [Living TOBACCO-FREE](#) at 781-485-6210.
- If you want **free over-the-phone coaching and free nicotine patches** - call the Massachusetts Smoker's Helpline at **1-800-Quit-Now** or **1-800- Déjalo (Spanish)**. Other languages: 1-800-784-8669. Deaf/TTY: 1-888-229-2182. 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. For more information, visit [Make Smoking History](#).
- If you want **free online help with quitting** - visit [Smokefree.gov](#) (also offers **texting** programs) and [BecomeAnEX.org](#).
- If you are a **Partners HealthCare employee**, contact **Partners in Helping You Quit** at 617-724-2205 or [PiHQ@partners.org](#). You may be eligible for free medication or over-the-phone counseling to help you cut down or quit.



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