Smoking and vaping have harmful effects on the body, including making it harder for the body to fight infections. This includes serious infections like COVID-19 (also called coronavirus). Learn how smoking and vaping can put your body at a higher risk of catching COVID-19 and how to quit smoking and vaping to protect yourself and others.

**DO SMOKING AND VAPING MAKE COVID-19 INFECTIONS WORSE?**

Yes. If a person who smokes catches COVID-19, they are more than twice as likely to develop a severe case of COVID-19 than those with no smoking history. This means if a person smokes and catches COVID-19, they are more likely to be admitted to the Intensive Care Unit (ICU), placed on a ventilator (breathing machine) or die from the illness. Menthol and other flavorings in tobacco products (including e-cigarettes) can also make lung infections, such as COVID-19, worse.

People who smoke or vape also have a higher risk of developing chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD, a long-term lung disease that affects how well air flows through the lungs). COPD could make COVID-19 infections worse.

**DO SMOKING AND VAPING INCREASE THE SPREAD OF COVID-19?**

Yes, smoking and vaping can increase the spread of COVID-19 in two ways:

- If a person who smokes or vapes has COVID-19, but does not show symptoms, they are more likely to spread the COVID-19 virus through coughing. People who smoke might also confuse a “smoker’s cough” with a cough caused by COVID-19.

- Smoking and vaping involve hand-to-mouth contact. This makes it easier for the COVID-19 virus to spread from their mouth to their hands and onto other surfaces.

**HOW DO SMOKING AND VAPING WEAKEN THE BODY’S DEFENSES AGAINST DISEASE?**

Smoking and vaping weaken the body’s natural defenses against disease in a few ways:

- **Tobacco use increases levels of angiotensin-converting enzyme 2 (ACE2).** ACE2 is an enzyme that helps the COVID-19 virus attach to cells in the lung once it enters the body.

- **Smoking and vaping damage the cilia** (hair-like structures that line the lungs to help move air throughout the lungs). This makes it easier for the COVID-19 virus to enter the lungs.

- **Smoking and vaping damage neutrophils and macrophages** (certain types of white blood cell that help fight infections). This makes it harder for the body to fight infections, including COVID-19.

- **Many tobacco flavorings, including menthol, affect how well lung and airway cells can fight infections, including COVID-19.**
HOW CAN I QUIT SMOKING/VAPING AND PROTECT MYSELF FROM COVID-19?

It is very important for people who smoke and vape to make every effort to quit. There is support to help you, including:

- **Use a nicotine patch and gum.** By using a patch and gum together, you are 4 times more likely to quit successfully.

- **Pair quit smoking medications with expert coaching and support.** Common quit smoking medications are bupropion and varenicline. Ask your doctor which quit smoking medications are right for you. Two common quit lines for coaching and support are 1-800-784-8669 and SmokefreeTXT. **Text the word “QUIT” (7848) to IQUIT (47848) for free help.**

With these steps, you will have the best chance of quitting smoking and vaping. Quitting smoking and vaping can help protect you and your family from COVID-19. Please share this information with family or friends who may still be smoking or vaping.