

# TIPS for TEENS

## E-CIGARETTES

### THE TRUTH ABOUT E-CIGARETTES



**SLANG: E-CIGS/E-HOOKAHS/  
VAPE PENS/VAPES/  
TANK SYSTEMS/MODS**

## GET THE FACTS

#### **E-CIGARETTES ARE A WAY TO INHALE NICOTINE AND MARIJUANA.**

The aerosol emitted can also contain other harmful substances, including heavy metals such as lead, volatile organic compounds, and cancer-causing agents.<sup>1</sup>

**E-CIGARETTES COME IN MANY SHAPES AND SIZES.** Some resemble pens, USB sticks, and other everyday items. Larger devices such as tank systems, or “mods,” do not resemble other tobacco products.

**E-CIGARETTE USE HARMS THE DEVELOPING BRAIN.** E-cigarettes typically deliver nicotine, a harmful drug to the youth brain and body. Teens are particularly vulnerable to the effects of nicotine since the brain is still developing during these years and through young adulthood.<sup>2</sup> People who use marijuana in an e-cigarette may experience the same side effects as they would if they smoked marijuana—all of which can be heightened if the person uses marijuana with another substance, such as alcohol.<sup>3</sup>

## ? Q&A

**Q. AREN'T E-CIGARETTES SAFER THAN SMOKING CIGARETTES OR USING SMOKELESS TOBACCO?**

**A.** Regular cigarettes are extraordinarily dangerous, killing half of all people who smoke long-term. However, youth use of tobacco products in any form is unsafe, including e-cigarettes. More research is needed to fully understand their impact on health.

**Q. CAN'T E-CIGARETTES HELP ME QUIT SMOKING REGULAR CIGARETTES?**

**A.** E-cigarettes may help non-pregnant adult smokers if used as a complete substitute for all cigarettes. However, there is no conclusive evidence that using e-cigarettes helps someone quit smoking for good.<sup>4</sup> The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has approved seven “quit aids” for quitting smoking, but e-cigarettes are not currently one of them.

**Q. AREN'T E-CIGARETTES USED MORE OFTEN BY ADULTS, NOT YOUTH?**

**A.** Youth are more likely than adults to use e-cigarettes. In 2018, more than 3.6 million U.S. middle and high school students used e-cigarettes in the past 30 days, including 4.9 percent of middle school students and 20.8 percent of high school students.<sup>5</sup>

#### **THE BOTTOM LINE:**

E-cigarettes are unsafe for young people. Whether a young person uses nicotine or marijuana in an e-cigarette, there can be dangerous health consequences.

#### **LEARN MORE:**

Get the latest information on how drugs affect the brain and body at [teens.drugabuse.gov](https://teens.drugabuse.gov).

#### **TO LEARN MORE ABOUT E-CIGARETTES, CONTACT:**

**SAMHSA**

**1-877-SAMHSA-7 (1-877-726-4727)**

(English and Español)

**TTY 1-800-487-4889**

**[www.samhsa.gov](https://www.samhsa.gov)**

**[store.samhsa.gov](https://store.samhsa.gov)**



# **SAMHSA**

Substance Abuse and Mental Health  
Services Administration



# BEFORE YOU RISK IT!

1

**KNOW THE LAW.** People ages 18 and older are allowed to buy e-cigarettes in most states—other states have an age requirement of 19 or 21. However, just because e-cigarettes are legal for adults to purchase doesn't mean they are safe, especially for young people.<sup>6</sup>

2

**KNOW THE RISKS.** Nicotine is highly addictive and can harm the developing adolescent brain. The nicotine in e-cigarettes and other tobacco products can also prime young brains for addiction to other drugs, such as cocaine and methamphetamine.<sup>7</sup>

3

**LOOK AROUND YOU.** E-cigarettes are the most commonly used tobacco product among youth. However, four out of five U.S. students overestimate peer e-cigarette use. If you've never smoked or used other tobacco products or e-cigarettes, don't start.<sup>8</sup>



## MORE INFORMATION

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR FOR RESOURCES USED IN THIS

# "TIPS for TEENS,"

visit [store.samhsa.gov](http://store.samhsa.gov) or call  
1-877-SAMHSA-7 (1-877-726-4727)  
(English and Español).

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**SAMHSA**  
Substance Abuse and Mental Health  
Services Administration



## WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP SOMEONE WHO IS USING E-CIGARETTES?

### BE A FRIEND.

Encourage your friend to stop using or seek help from a parent, teacher, or other caring adult.

For 24/7 free and confidential information and referrals in English and Spanish, call SAMHSA's National Helpline at:

1-800-662-HELP (1-800-662-4357)

or visit the SAMHSA Behavioral Health Treatment Services Locator at:  
[findtreatment.samhsa.gov](http://findtreatment.samhsa.gov)

<sup>1</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). (2018). Electronic cigarettes. *Smoking & Tobacco Use*. Retrieved from [https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/basic\\_information/e-cigarettes/index.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/basic_information/e-cigarettes/index.htm)

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). (2016). *E-Cigarette Use Among Youth and Young Adults: A Report of the Surgeon General*. Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health. Retrieved from [https://e-cigarettes.surgeongeneral.gov/documents/2016\\_SGR\\_Full\\_Report\\_508.pdf](https://e-cigarettes.surgeongeneral.gov/documents/2016_SGR_Full_Report_508.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> NIDA. (2017). *Marijuana: Facts for Teens*. Retrieved from <https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/marijuana-facts-teens/want-to-know-more-some-faqs-about-marijuana>

<sup>4</sup> NIDA. (2018). Electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes). Retrieved from <https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/drugfacts/electronic-cigarettes-e-cigarettes>

<sup>5</sup> Cullen, K. A., Ambrose, B. K., Gentzke, A. S., Apelberg, B. J., Jamal, A., & King, B. A. (2018). Notes from the field: Use of electronic cigarettes and any tobacco product among middle and high school students — United States, 2011–2018. *Morbidity & Mortality Weekly Report*, 67(45):1276–77.

<sup>6</sup> CDC (2018). STATE System Tobacco 21 fact sheet. Retrieved from <https://chronicdata.cdc.gov/download/873a-iff4/application%2Fpdf>

<sup>7</sup> HHS. (2016). Fact sheet. *E-Cigarette Use Among Youth and Young Adults: A Report of the Surgeon General*. Retrieved from [https://e-cigarettes.surgeongeneral.gov/documents/2016\\_SGR\\_Fact\\_Sheet\\_508.pdf](https://e-cigarettes.surgeongeneral.gov/documents/2016_SGR_Fact_Sheet_508.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> Agaku, I. T., Odani, S., Homa, D., Armour, B., & Glover-Kudon, R. (2018). Discordance between perceived and actual tobacco product use prevalence among US youth: A comparative analysis of electronic and regular cigarettes. *Tobacco Control*. Retrieved from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/29674512>