

Parent Toolkit: Let's Talk about Vaping

According to experts, **the best approach to avoiding teen vape use is to educate your kids when they're young, before they've even been exposed to or offered a vape.** Help your children understand the facts about vaping. This toolkit article is designed to educate parents so that you can talk to your children, recognize the signs of vaping and know where to go if you need help.

What is vaping? It's hard to scroll through the news lately without seeing an article about teens and vaping, or "juuling" as it is sometimes called. Vaping's popularity exploded in 2017, taking many families, schools and healthcare providers by surprise. Vaping or "juuling" (named after a popular vape device called JUUL), is the inhaling and exhaling of an aerosol produced using a vape device. With advertising geared toward teens and young adults, devices designed to attract attention and thousands of flavors to choose from, the expectation is that growth will continue. Vape devices, known as *e-cigs*, *e-hookahs*, *mods*, *vape pens*, *vapes*, *tank systems* and *Juuls*, contain four basic components: a cartridge or tank to hold e-liquid (or e-juice/vape sauce), a heating element known as an atomizer, a battery and a mouthpiece to inhale. A sensor detects when a person is trying to inhale. This triggers the battery to supply electricity to the atomizer. The heat given off vaporizes the e-liquid. The resulting vapor is what is inhaled.

What is being vaped? Many substances can be vaped, but the most common are variations of flavored e-liquids which come in small bottles or pre-filled pods or cartridges.

- **Flavored e-liquids** come in thousands of flavors ranging from cotton candy and grape to king crab legs and hot dog.
- **Flavored e-liquids with differing levels of nicotine:** One of the more popular devices, Juul, contains 59 mg/ml of nicotine in each pod, the equivalent of a pack of cigarettes.
- **Flavored e-liquids with Marijuana.** Marijuana can be vaped in a variety of forms including its dried leaves or using THC and/or CBD oil (THC is the psychoactive compound that creates a sense of being high).

Why is vaping so popular? Vaping was intended to be a less harmful option for adult smokers, but enticing flavors combined with the power of social media to set off trends like "cloud competitions" (think smoke rings and other exhaling tricks) have made it attractive to many teens and young adults.

Answers to common questions. Children commonly say that vaping is safer than smoking cigarettes. A good way to address this is to explain that exposure to toxic substances may be reduced, but there are still significant concerns when replacing cigarette use with vaping. One's lungs are exposed to fine particles, metals, other toxins and nicotine which are all harmful. You may use the example that "Driving 90 miles an hour with a seat belt on is safer than without one, but neither is safe." The same goes for vaping. And as with all substance use, ask your child why they're interested in vaping in the first place. Children sometimes also say that "everyone is doing it". A good reply is that while you might think this because of what you see in school or on social media, the fact is that the majority of teens are choosing not to vape.

Tips for talking to your kids about vaping:



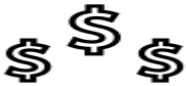
Find the time to talk. The sooner you start talking, the better. Bring up the subject when you see it on TV, in movies, or in magazines.



Be direct. Say, “I don’t want you to use e-cigarettes.” Tell them your reasons. They’ll appreciate your honesty and guidance.



Talk about the real facts. Just saying “Vaping is bad for you!” isn’t enough. Young people are more likely to listen if you give them facts. Don’t just talk about e-cigarettes – give them facts about vaping products like JUULs, and other tobacco products such as mini-cigars and [hookah](#).



Focus on the social issues. Young people may care more about getting bad breath or irritating their friends who don’t vape than about the health risks. Help them understand the financial costs as well. Remind them that most teenagers do not use e-cigarettes/vaping products.



Teach them to say no. Help them to think of what to say if they are offered vaping.

HELP – My Child is Vaping! Parents are often embarrassed or scared to admit that their child is vaping. However, parents need support and should feel free to reach out to the school counselor (Elementary Schools) or Substance Abuse Counselor (Middle and High Schools). These professionals have “seen it all” and they are here to help you, not judge you.